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US claims success as Iraq is hit by heavy new wave of air strikes

BRITAIN AND the United States launched a second wave of air strikes at Iraq last night, mounting devastating raids around the centre of Baghdad.

The city was rocked by 13 explosions shortly after 10pm local time (7pm GMT) as the first wave of attacks targeted the central district.

Anti-aircraft fire, this time more sustained and more intense than Wednesday's opening salvo, lit up the sky for approximately 15 minutes. Witnesses reported three huge plumes of smoke, glowing orange, from the city centre. One building close to the Al Rashid international hotel - where many Western journalists are based - was said to have been badly damaged during the strike.

Britain played a more prominent role in last night's raids than in any assaults since the

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Baghdad
ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington
AND ANDREW GRICE
in London

Cohen, the US Defense Secretary.

The US launched attacks on 50 targets across Iraq, including air defences and airfields, command, control and communications, and sites where United Nations inspectors suspect material for weapons of mass destruction was being hidden. But they are also believed to have hit the most important military and security props of the regime. The headquarters of Iraqi military intelligence in Baghdad were destroyed, as were several barracks belonging to the Special Republican Guard on the outskirts of the city.

Britain played a more prominent role in last night's raids than in any assaults since the



Baghdad citizens stand on the debris of a house which was destroyed by a rocket as they watch workers repair a water pipe yesterday

Reinhard Krause/Reuters

of our continuing resolve," he said.

Both British and American officials have said that future efforts to control President Saddam will involve bombing raids rather than sending UN inspectors back to Iraq. "We have the surveillance to know what is going on," said one British source.

Mr Clinton has come under fierce criticism for the timing of the strikes from congressional Republicans, coming as they did on the eve of an impeachment debate that could end in

his removal from power. Yesterday, Congress sought to find a new time for the debate, which was postponed, but there was no agreement between Democrats and Republicans on a suitable time.

"It's not true," said the President, when asked whether the attacks had been intended to draw fire from his political predicament.

"What I did was the right thing for the country. I don't think any serious person would believe that any president would do such a thing."

"We're going to complete this mission. And the Republican leaders will have to decide how to do their job. That's not for me to comment on."

Mr Blair strongly defended President Clinton, insisting that the military action had nothing to do with the moves to impeach him. He told the Commons: "There are suggestions that the timing of military action is somehow linked to the internal affairs of the United States. I refute this entirely."

The Prime Minister won the backing of the Tories, Liberal

Democrats and most Labour MPs after he told the Commons: "This is not directed at the Iraqi people; it is directed at the brutal dictatorship of Saddam Hussein." He said President Saddam was "blind to reason," and "a man to whom a last chance to do right is just a further opportunity to do wrong."

Several Labour MPs expressed their disquiet at Britain's involvement. Tony Benn said the strikes were "a flagrant breach of the UN charter and deeply immoral".

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'A huge explosion shook our house'

"I HEARD a loud explosion which shook my house and we were all afraid," said Ali Jouda, a 16-year-old schoolboy, peering into a 10ft-deep crater made by a cruise missile in Karada street in central Baghdad.

The missile struck at about 1am, demolishing two houses and injuring 30 people. The blast stripped the leaves off a tree and the hot shrapnel was still stuck in its bark.

After the first night of attacks, the mood in Baghdad was stoic but edgy.

Hearing Ali Jouda speak, Raad Ibrahim, a student, contradicted him, saying: "I was not afraid. We're used to it. All the people were on the rooftops

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Baghdad

looking at the missiles strike."

Ali Jouda showed a chunk of aluminium which had come from the missile.

Meanwhile repairs were going ahead fast. A mechanical digger was scooping up debris and pumps were reducing the level of water in the crater.

Most of the strikes yesterday morning were beyond the outer suburbs - unlike in 1991, when power stations were hit in the first hours of the Gulf War.

But there were civilian casualties. In the Yarmuk Hospital, Dr Dhuha Kanan, the head of surgery, said: "We

received 10 civilian dead on arrival, as well as 30 wounded, of whom four have died."

One of the injured was Hamid Mohsin, 30, his face badly burned by an explosion. Scorched hands stuck out from under the bedclothes, covered in ointment. "He may lose both of them," said Dr Kanan.

Baghdad was outwardly calm yesterday. Few soldiers were on the streets. Shops were open and traffic was heavy. But there were also signs of apprehension. Queues of cars outside petrol stations were long.

There was little information on military casualties. But outside the Yarmuk Hospital, a

lieutenant in uniform wept as he stood beside a taxi with two coffins lashed to the roof. The dead men were soldiers and the coffins were draped in the Iraqi flag.

Among the targets hit was the home of Halla, Saddam Hussein's youngest daughter, though she had moved out several days ago.

Mohammed Said al-Sahas, Iraq's Foreign Minister, confirmed that the headquarters of both the military intelligence service and the security services had been hit, along with many industrial enterprises.

Baghdad Radio said President Saddam had toured damaged buildings early in the morning.

Iraq's anti-aircraft fire was not as spectacular as in the Gulf War. This may be because Iraq is short of ammunition and is saving it for low-flying aircraft.

Iraqi television went off the air during the attack, but returned yesterday evening. This is important for the government as Iraqis get most of their news from TV.

If the government is surprised by what is happening, it is not showing it. "It's all to do with Monica [Lewinsky]," one official told *The Independent*.

Asked how the crisis would end, he said: "It is all in the hands of two men" - presumably President Clinton and President Saddam.

A sign of the ambivalent mood in the Iraqi capital was that last night, as air-raid sirens were sounding, there were wedding parties in the streets outside the al-Rashid Hotel, banging drums and sounding trumpets.

As darkness fell the streets began to empty, but the silence did not last long. As the second wave of bombing began, anti-aircraft batteries fired and explosions from incoming missiles and bombs rocked the city. Thick columns of smoke rose. The skyline glowed orange as if buildings were on fire. After several more explosions, smoke began to spread across the city.

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RAF Tornados spearhead second phase of Desert Fox campaign

THE AIR ASSAULT

BY JOHN DAVISON
ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington
AND ANDREW BUNCOMBE

IT WAS shortly after 15.00 GMT yesterday that the pink afterburners of RAF Tornados could be seen streaking off into the Kuwaiti evening sky.

Within two hours the pilots had landed safely back at the Al Al Salem airbase, north of Kuwait City and just 35 miles from the border with Iraq, and clambered from their cockpits into the cool desert air. Their mission, or at least the first part of it, had been completed.

It is a task that will certainly continue. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said yesterday that the British aircraft would carry out 20 per cent of the manned bombing missions of an operation estimated to last two or three days.

The British jets had launched the second wave of attacks, under Operation Desert Fox, on the Iraqi capital Baghdad. They were quickly followed into the air by American B52 bombers which took off from the British island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

Though it was not clear whether the attacks had succeeded in hitting their planned targets or how many civilians may have been killed, Air Marshall John Day, deputy chief of the Defence Staff and director of operations, said yesterday evening that he expected the mood amongst the British air crew to be euphoric.

"There is a very serious job to be done and many sorties still to be flown. So there will be a mixture of euphoria together with a rightful professionalism and concern for what is left to be done," he said. "This is not a simple operation."

The launch of the two-man British Tornado GR1 fighter bombers followed a day of assessment yesterday by senior military commanders of the success of Wednesday night's attack by sea-based American missiles.

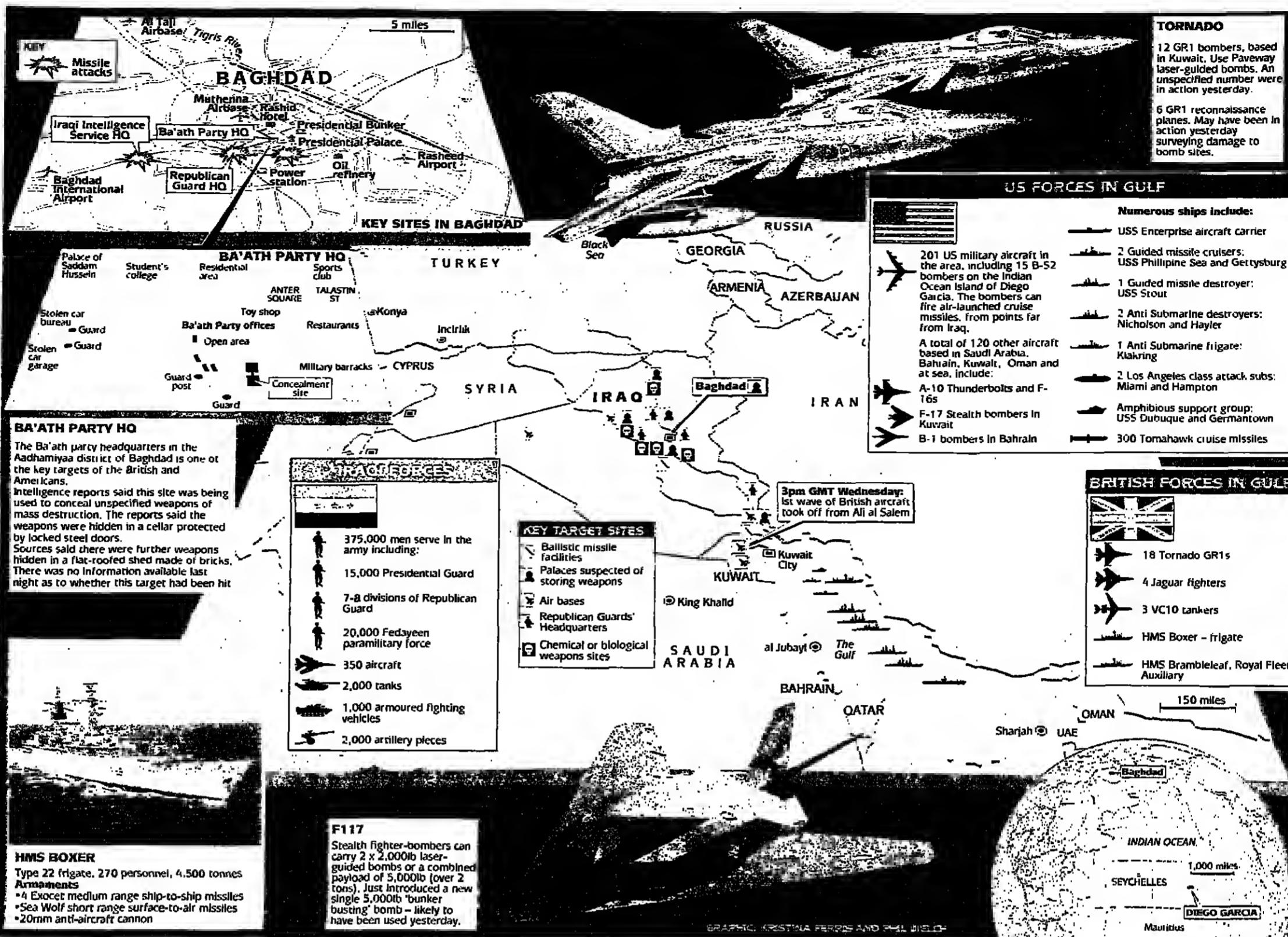
"I've seen some of the (reconnaissance) photos this morning and some of the targets that we have looked at appear to be severely damaged," William Cohen, the US Secretary of Defense, said.

This assessment would have been made using pictures from military satellites and U2 spy planes, and from listening to transmissions coming from Iraqi command centres.

Six Tornado reconnaissance aircraft, based in Saudi Arabia, could also have been used yesterday to help in the assessment of the initial attack, in which 50 sites were targeted with around 200 cruise missiles.

There were reports, however, that some of the cruise missiles had struck civilian properties, perhaps because they were diverted by Iraqi anti-aircraft fire that had been unleashed in an effort to shoot them down.

The priority targets from Wednesday would have been Iraq's Russian-designed air defence system.



fence system. Observers said these needed to be taken out first to establish air supremacy. After that, aircraft would be able to attempt further attacks with the minimum of losses.

The facilities in the air-defence system would include command and control bunkers, radar installations, airfields and anti-aircraft missile sites. Only after these have been neutralised would aircraft be sent on to the other targets.

Further protection to the bombers would be given by the use of US electronic jamming aircraft, whose role is to disorientate any remaining air defence systems. In theory, the aircraft should expect only limited retaliation.

The Tornados, all from 12 Squadron based at Lossiemouth, in Scotland, had designated their own targets but would have flown in the same "packages" with US aircraft.

No Iraqi aircraft had posed any threat during the first phase of operations, said Air Marshall Day.

He said they would be sent to home in on its target.

The lead aircraft of the pair is equipped with Thermal Imaging Airborne Laser Designator (TIALD) equipment slung beneath the aeroplane in a pod. In addition, the lead craft could carry another "bunker buster" Paveway 3 bomb or two of the lighter Paveway 2s.

The first GR1 pinpoints the target with its laser equipment, with co-ordinates programmed into the system from detailed maps before take-off, and the second aeroplane drops its bombs using the equipment from the lead aircraft.

The Paveway bombs have the capability to penetrate concrete, making them useful in attacks on aircraft shelters and command and control posts, some of which are heavily protected.

They are accurate to within yards from a height of up to 35,000ft because of the laser system. This system was unavailable early in the Gulf War and led to more dangerous low level missions.

Britain's coral island is platform for attacks

BY ANDREW MARSHALL

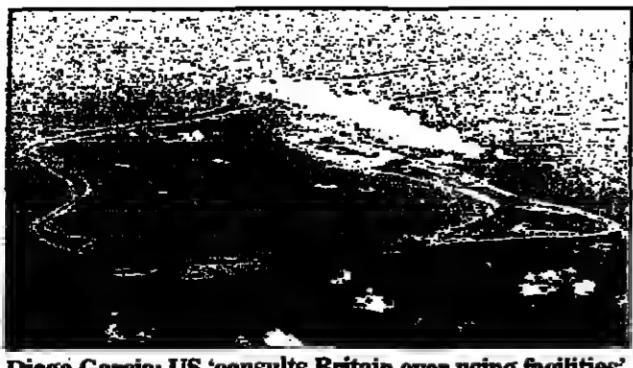
THE UNITED States attacks on Iraq have reminded the world of the strategic importance of a remote British island in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

The B-52 bombers flew from Diego Garcia, a US Navy base with a 12,000ft runway on a British-owned tropical island.

The island is a coral atoll of about 11 square miles, enclosing a 100ft deep lagoon. In the Chagos Archipelago, it is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, a "colony" that was invented in the 1970s as British military forces left the Gulf and other strategic bases in the Indian Ocean. The island played a crucial part in the Gulf crisis in 1990-91 and in the UN intervention in Somalia in 1992.

Both British and American flocks fly over the island. Like many of Britain's earlier possessions, it was acquired under

KEY AIRBASE



Diego Garcia: US consults Britain over using facilities

a strategy of controlling the oceans; East Africa, Singapore, Calcutta and Australia are within 3,000 miles of it.

A British-US agreement of 1986, revised in 1978, makes the islands of the British Indian Ocean Territory available for "defence purposes" to both governments.

With the British Govern-

ment the only one in the world to express wholehearted support for the US attacks on southern Iraq, agreement to its use was not in doubt, but the US consulted Britain anyway, if only out of politeness.

"In no way is it leased to the Americans," the Foreign Office said yesterday. "The US authorities consult us in advance. Have you seen the beach?"

through the normal diplomatic channels about using the defence facilities."

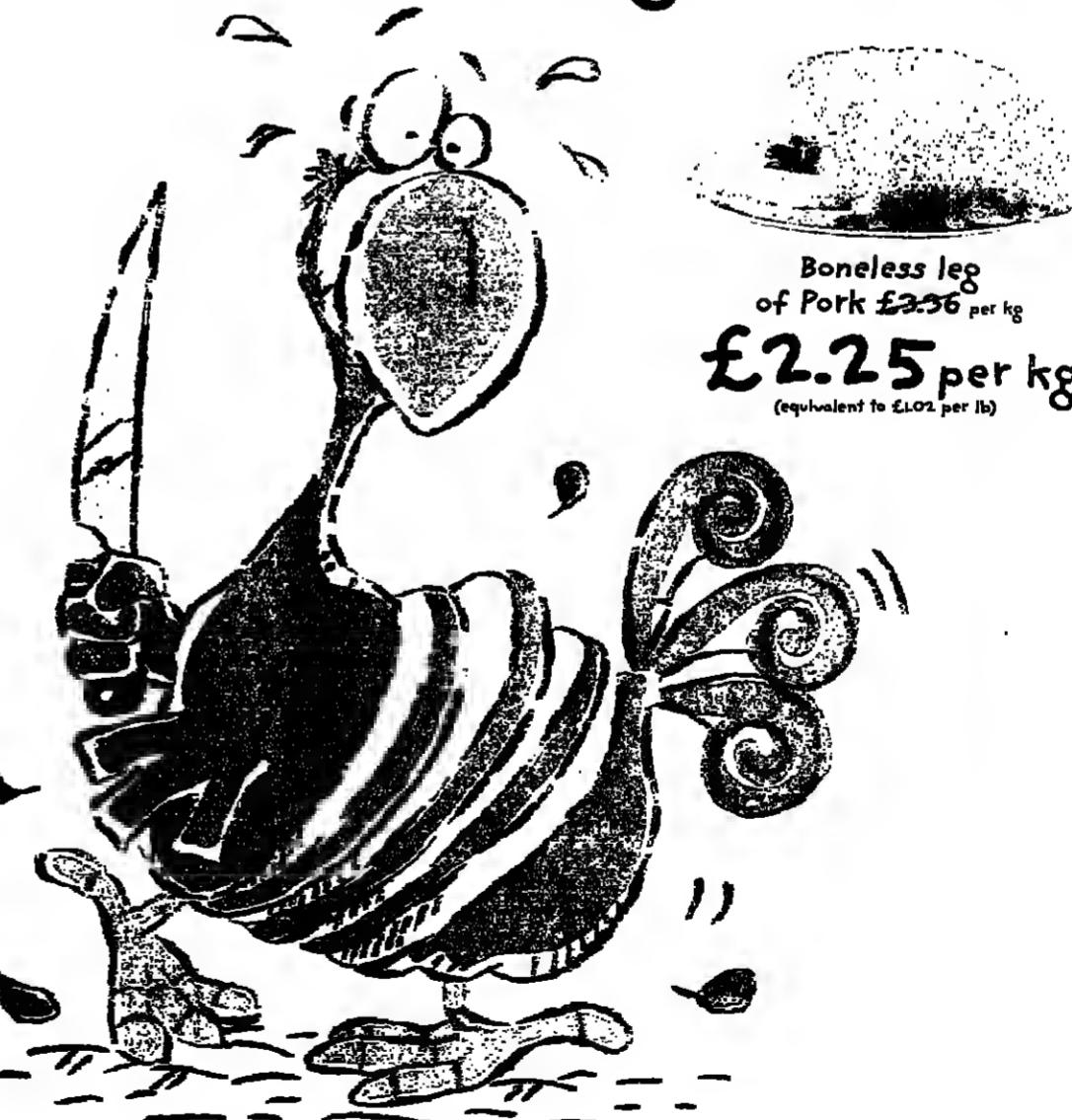
There is no town or substantial civilian population on the island. It was all removed when Britain converted the island into a military base, and relocated to Mauritius. The British presence consists of 30 Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel.

Some 900 US personnel are based on the island, along with five ships loaded with equipment for a US marine expeditionary brigade. The brigade, 15,000-strong, would fly in and leave on the ships ready to sail to any nearby trouble-spots, probably in Africa or the Middle East.

Like all American air bases,

wherever they may be, the facilities are all-American, and include a bowling alley. Few British personnel have served there. "I wish I had," said one. "Have you seen the beach?"

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Tony Blair and Bill Clinton hope the bombing campaign will clear the way for the Iraqi military to topple Saddam Hussein, but they know this is a gamble

Toppling Saddam will be long haul

NO ONE could say that Tony Blair and Bill Clinton are not singing from the same hymn sheet when it comes to Saddam Hussein.

When the Prime Minister emerged from Downing Street on Wednesday night, he said: "Our objectives in this military action are clear: to degrade his capability to build and use weapons of mass destruction,

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

and to diminish the threat he poses to his neighbours."

Minutes later, the President said: "Our mission is clear - to degrade his capacity to develop and use weapons of mass destruction or to threaten his neighbours."

The military side of the

equation may be clear, but the political strategy is opaque, and deliberately so. The US and Britain are hoping that the air strikes will undermine Saddam through weapons inspections - and the first blast of a new one.

The old policy relied on four elements: weapons inspections, sanctions, a regional and international group of countries

that were committed to con-

tinuing the regime, and the threat of military force. Each is of diminishing value.

The weapons inspections, certainly, are over; a fact now acknowledged by Britain and the US. Indeed, it is arguable that the Unscos mission has been dead for over a year. "Un-

scom has been ineffective for some time," said Sandy Berger, the President's national security adviser.

So the most obvious reason for the strikes is to hit the known targets once and for all, knowing that there is little that can be done now within Iraq to prevent Saddam Hussein from secretly developing weapons of mass destruction.

Obviously, this course of action can not be repeated, especially given that the intelligence the West has will become gradually less useful. So what next? "We will pursue a long-term strategy to contain Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction, and work towards the day when Iraq has a government worthy of its people," said Mr Clinton.

Take the second part first: replacing Saddam. The covert efforts by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Secret Intelligence Service to topple the Iraqi leader have so far been farcical and disastrous. It is likely that the US and Britain hope that, by targeting units like the Special Republican Guard and the Special Security Service - key props of the regime, and the weapons concealment operation - they can open a window of opportunity for the Iraqi military to oust Saddam. But that is a pretty faint hope.

In the longer term, the US and Britain hope that Saddam will go, and that a better regime will emerge. "The hard fact is that so long as Saddam remains in power, he threatens the well-being of his people, the peace of his region and the security of the world," said Mr Clinton.

"The best way to end that threat once and for all is with a new Iraqi government - a government ready to live in peace with its neighbours. Bringing change in Baghdad will take time and effort. We will strengthen our engagement with the full range of Iraqi opposition forces and work with them effectively and prudently." The key word here is "time", something neither Washington nor London have any influence over.

So the longer-term plan has to involve thinking about life with Saddam for some years. The UN's "oil for food" programme will garner more resources for the regime, enabling it to improve conditions in the country and to help its supporters.

In a brilliant piece of analysis earlier this year, Anthony Cordesman of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, looked at the question of "Living with Saddam".

"Much as we may dislike tyranny, Saddam's regime is one of the most effective authoritarian regimes of modern times. Saddam may not be popular, but he is accepted and he is in control," he said.

Military force will clearly be a part of this long-term strategy. "We must be prepared to use force again if Saddam takes threatening actions," said President Clinton. "The credible threat to use force, and when necessary, the actual use of force, is the surest way to contain Saddam's weapons of mass destruction program, curtail his aggression and prevent another Gulf War."

"So long as Iraq remains out of compliance, we will work with the international community to maintain and enforce economic sanctions," he added.

But sanctions will be increasingly hard to maintain. Iraq will, without Unscos, be able to start replacing its military material and developing weapons of mass destruction. The message of the strikes is partly that Saddam is there, and will be there for some time.

That is why the strikes that are taking place are intended to do as much damage as possible: they are the beginning of what may be a long haul.

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Backbenchers dismayed at Blair support

LABOUR DISSENT

BY ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

AS LABOUR MPs sat in a crowded House of Commons tearoom yesterday, their discussion of the Iraq crisis kept returning to one issue: Tony Blair's high-profile role. "He wants to be Thatcher and Churchill rolled into one," said one Labour backbencher.

Even MPs who supported the bombing were surprised that the Prime Minister had announced Wednesday night's raids more than 40 minutes before Bill Clinton told America.

Close aides say Mr Blair's fierce patriotism means he does not pull his punches during international crises. "He always wants to fly the Tornados himself," one minister said.

Mr Blair is in no doubt that the use of force is justified. "It would be a dereliction of duty if we had not taken the action we have done," he told yesterday's cabinet meeting.

Ministers admit privately that the imminent vote on the President's impeachment is a case of "unfortunate timing". But Mr Blair is adamant that Mr Clinton's actions are not related to his domestic traumas.

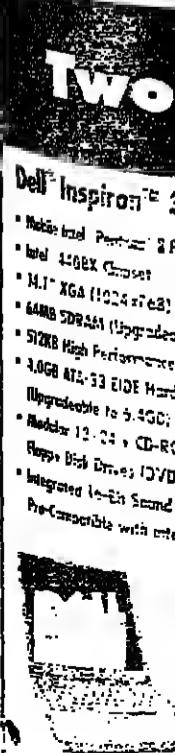
The lukewarm international support for military strikes is a far cry from the impressive coalition assembled against Saddam Hussein after his invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Britain launched a diplomatic offens-

sive yesterday, when the Prime Minister wrote to the other 14 European Union leaders, sent messages to top Commonwealth countries and tried to make contact with Russia and China - both of which have been critical of the strikes.

Last night, Downing Street denied that Britain and the US were isolated, saying that there had been positive reactions from Germany, Spain, Canada, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Japan and Australia.

Although Mr Blair won the support of the Tories, the Liberal Democrats and the majority of Labour MPs, ministers are worried that a sizeable minority of Labour backbenchers will cause problems in the days ahead. George Galloway, one of the most vociferous critics, said: "More backbenchers now opposed action than in February, when 28 voted against military action and about 50 abstained."

Back in 1991, four current ministers - John Prescott, Robin Cook, Clare Short and Margaret Beckett - incurred the wrath of Neil Kinnock, then leader of the Opposition, by expressing reservations about the Gulf War when Mr Kinnock was desperate to prove Labour was no longer "soft" on defence.



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Representatives had come to Washington ready to bury Clinton, instead they found themselves praising him

Parties go to war on impeachment

CONGRESS

REPUBLICAN LEADERS appeared to have decided last night to open the impeachment debate of President Bill Clinton today on the House floor and vote by tomorrow afternoon even if the attacks against Iraq are not over. But this move ran into opposition.

The debate had been set for yesterday but Republicans grudgingly agreed to a postponement after Mr Clinton ordered airstrikes against Iraq.

Representatives had come to Washington to bury the President and found themselves praising him instead.

Summoned back to Washington for only the second House impeachment debate in US history, they trooped into the Chamber yesterday to chorus a panegyric to America's "men

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington



Gingrich: We are a nation ready to lead the world

and women in uniform" and to train their fire on another enemy, that old Washington standby, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

But Republican leaders were determined to force the agenda on impeachment.

The debate, postponed for an indeterminate "few days" following US and British strikes on Iraq, was all but forgotten in the fervour whipped up around US troops now "in harm's way".

In a reminder of the day's original agenda, hundreds of coaches converged on the Capitol, bringing people who had expected a prayer vigil in the President's support as the House debated his fate. Called

to support for Mr Clinton outside Washington in a final attempt to convince Republicans to change their vote.

Suddenly, though, the representatives in the Capitol and those outside were singing the same tune: polls yesterday showed 70 per cent of respondents approving Mr Clinton's use of force against Iraq. Asked by a reporter about accusations that he hoped to deflect attention from impeachment, he flashed back: "It's not true."

Listening to the House "debate" yesterday it was almost possible to believe the nation and their representatives were united. The resolution, sponsored by Republicans, offered support for the troops in the Gulf and called for the removal of President Saddam. The first speaker was the outgoing House Speaker; the Representative from Georgia, a slightly thinner, tamer Newt Gingrich.

As Speaker, he said, he had been "legitimately consulted" by the President in advance of the strikes. "It would be nice," he said, "to run and hide, find some grand isolation in which to cover," but today, "in this age", it was impossible. "We have a chance today to say to the world: 'no matter what our constitutional process, no mat-

ter what our debates at home, we are as a nation prepared to lead the world'." Thereafter the air was thick with reminiscences of war and heroism (the speakers included no fewer than three Gulf war veterans and a clutch of Vietnam veterans).

But a close reading of the resolution - which was passed by acclamation - and some throwaway lines in some speeches, showed the extent to which the debate had been stage-managed and how close to the surface were the risks. The resolution made no mention to the President or support for him; support was for the commanders and troops in the field.

Republicans had to balance their determination to impeach the President and their genuine rejection of his conduct in the Lewinsky affair with the patriotic requirement for support at a time of national crisis - and the Republicans split.

Trent Lott, their leader in the Senate, said that while "all Americans will fully support our troops in battle", he personally could not support military action "at this time ... Both the timing and the policy are subject to question."

Dick Armey, his deputy, said that "the suspicion about Clinton's motives" could "in itself be a powerful argument for impeachment ... the President has given millions of people around the world reason to doubt he has sent Americans into battle for the right reasons." Republican anger was less defined than in suspense, and pressure for the impeachment debate to be held sooner rather than later simmered in the background. But if senior Democrats have their way, the delay could last into next week. The House Minority Leader, Dick Gephardt, said: "What will Saddam Hussein think if, at the very time our people over there are attacking him militarily, the Congress here is moving on an effort to take the President out of office?"

'Saddam breaks a law every day'

AMERICA SPEAKS

RICHARD LANG, who has left his dry-cleaning business in Connecticut for a day of Christmas shopping in Manhattan with his wife and daughter, does not even want to talk about any domestic motives that President Bill Clinton did or did not have in attacking Iraq. Such talk, he says, is just not right.

"When the troops leave our shores partisanship has to stop," he says, sheltering from rain in the Rockefeller complex. "You have to remember there are families with loved ones out there in the Gulf."

Besides, he says, what difference will it make to the Republican effort to impeach Mr Clinton? "Have the vote on Friday or have it on Monday, it doesn't matter."

It helps that Mr Lang has no doubt that Saddam Hussein deserves the wrath of American and British forces. "If anything Clinton should have done it before," he said.

Indeed, in serial interviews with Americans in midtown yesterday, there was near unanimity of opinion that punishing Saddam was, in itself, the right thing to do. It was the swell of opinion that informed several overnight snap polls in the United States showing support for the bombing operation running at roughly four to one.

The same polls also showed a majority unwilling to believe that Mr Clinton ordered the strikes simply to stave off the impeachment vote pending in the House of Representatives.

In New York, news of the strikes on Wednesday came for many via the jumbotron television screen in Times Square. A large crowd had gathered in the early evening when the screen showed Mr Clinton addressing the nation for 15 minutes to explain his reasons for the assault. "I think Clinton did the right thing," offered Salvatore Natoli,

BY DAVID USBORNE
in New York

a veteran of the Second World War who yesterday was selling chenille scarves to tourists from a trestle table on Fifth Avenue. The table, though, was covered in clear plastic to ward off the rain, and he had no customers. "Saddam Hussein has chemicals and he could hit whole populations, including his own, and he has germs too."

Where people divide, however, is over what motivated President Clinton to order the attack. For Mr Natoli, the suggestion that it was meant as a diversion from the President's impeachment woes is ridiculous. "President Clinton should go down in history as the greatest president we ever had."

Chris Steidinger, an aspiring chiropractor who for now is working in a museum shop at the Rockefeller Center, was altogether more cynical. "Saddam should be hit, he breaks an international law every day of the week, doesn't he? He is a tyrant. But I think the timing was all wrong. President Clinton wants to stay in power and that's what it's about."

Not everyone was celebrating the attack. Ruth, who would not give her full name, paused at her counter at the Rockefeller Center ice rink where she hands out skates.

"I think it's horrible, what's happening. I'm against war. I'm a pacifist. If you don't stop war then war will always happen. When are we going to stop it?"

But she is positively indignant that people might think the President was attempting a diversion from impeachment. "I don't think that's right, because that would be so awful, I mean to send people to war for that kind of reason. No, I can't believe that."

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PM shows the strain in face of resounding support

MOST PEOPLE, if required to read out a 25 minute speech in front of a large and potentially sceptical crowd, wouldn't put money on their ability to make it from start to finish without a single slip of the tongue. But Tony Blair could make such a bet with fair confidence that he wouldn't lose very often. It is one of the Prime Minister's less salient talents that he hardly ever makes a fluff when he reads a statement to the House, even when he departs from the fairway of his script into the rough of scribbled addenda.

Yesterday, though, as he made his statement on the bombing of Iraq, the accuracy of his transmis-

sion wasn't quite up to its usual standards - seven or eight times there was a mispronunciation or slur, or a tiny hesitation which wasn't part of the familiar halting rhythm he adopts when the occasion calls for high seriousness:

I wouldn't want to suggest that these were structural cracks in the facade of deliberated resolve which the Prime Minister wanted to present - there was absolutely no prospect of a large slab of statesmanlike purpose sheering off, to reveal a jerry-built construct beneath - not least because almost every MP present was at pains not to lean too heavily against the plaster-

work. But these little vocal glitches were evidence that the structure was under pressure, microscopic stress fractures testifying to the considerable load that was bearing down on the speaker:

As I say, the burden wasn't that of parliamentary scrutiny. "As I speak, British Tornado aircraft are engaged in action," Mr Blair had said near the beginning of his statement, and he must have known as he did so that he was triggering a sensitive reflex - one that continued to twitch in the questions and debate that followed, as speaker after speaker made the required genuflection to our brave men and

women. This was just jaw-jaw, but out there somewhere acts of war were taking place and the instinct of solidarity could be relied on.

Nor was Mr Blair worried about

the stray rounds from his backbenchers - "friendly fire" you could call it, if anything remotely like amity could be detected in the seething indignation of George Galloway and Tony Benn. Those he could dismiss with a kind of baffled bemusement.

When Mr Galloway passionately denounced "a new crusade, led not by Richard the Lionheart but by Clinton the Liar", Mr Blair rose and shook his head. "I find it - well, to be honest I get beyond anger," he said resignedly, before pointing out how perverse it was to attack the American President while offering not a word of condemnation of Saddam Hussein.

The bravery of British airmen

was invoked repeatedly, with a faintly distasteful glibness, but the courage in the chamber came from those kamikaze backbenchers who took off in the face of insuperable odds. They were fighting on the wrong side and were poignantly vulnerable to even the lightest fire. Tony Benn, engines screaming as he zeroed in on the aircraft carrier *Western Hypocrisy*, stuttered off course after Christopher Leslie had intervened to ask him what alternative course of action he would suggest. But, even if you think them mad or bad, there was something impressive about the determination with which they went down blazing.

Blair
vows to
weaken
dictator

COMMONS DEBATE

THE PRIME Minister said yesterday there has been "substantial" military damage inflicted on Iraq over Saddam Hussein's failure to comply with the United Nations resolution on weapons inspections.

In a sombre statement to the Commons, Tony Blair denied it was a "specific objective" to remove the dictator, stressing that such action would require hundreds of thousands of ground troops.

The decision to take military action against Iraq was taken with great regret. It is a heavy responsibility. There will be casualties in Iraq, despite all our efforts. We have absolutely no quarrel with the Iraqi people but we have acted because we have to counter a real and present danger from a tyrant who has never hesitated to use whatever weapons come to hand."

Rising to a crowded chamber, Mr Blair strongly refuted the timing of the air strikes were "somehow linked to the internal affairs of the United States", saying: "I have no doubt whatsoever that action is justified now. That is my strongly personal view."

Had Bill Clinton acted differently, out of regard to internal matters to United States politics, that would have been a dereliction of his duty as President, he added.

The Prime Minister said that once the military action was over, the UN would be better placed than if it had to go on dealing with a Saddam Hussein whose military capability had not been weakened.

First reports from last night's operations suggest that they were successful and inflicted the kind of military damage we were seeking.

"If Saddam will not see reason, then after this military operation is concluded, we will work to ensure that Saddam's weakened military capability cannot be rebuilt and that the threat he poses is fully contained. We have the ability to do so, even without Unscow (the UN weapons inspection committee) if necessary."

Britain would "maintain and enforce" rigorously the existing sanctions, Mr Blair said. "If necessary, and if we have serious evidence from our intensive surveillance, or from our intel-

ligence, that his capability is being rebuilt, we will be ready to take further military action. Saddam should have no doubt of our continuing resolve."

But Mr Blair said the objectives of "degrading" Saddam Hussein's ability to build weapons of mass destruction and weakening his military capability were "achievable".

The action taken was "proportionate to the serious dangers it poses to his immediate neighbours, the Middle East region and the international community more widely."

"The targets throughout Iraq have been very carefully selected to reflect these objectives. We are taking every possible care to avoid civilian casualties or damage to ordinary civilian infrastructure."

The attack has not been led by Richard the Lionheart, but by Clinton the Liar," he added.

Dennis Canavan, Labour MP for Falkirk, added: "British and Iraqi lives are being put at risk in a desperate attempt to which we are being asked to risk and lied to."

They had "achieved a huge amount" in destroying Iraq's chemical and biological weapons capability, told MPs it was "too much - remains unaccounted for".

The Prime Minister praised the bravery and professionalism of the allied forces, saying: "I know the whole House will be moved in wishing them as well as they risk their lives to help ensure peace and stability in the Middle East and more widely."

To cheers from all sides, he added: "We are proud of them."

Later, during further debate on the air strikes, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said: "As long as Saddam remains in power, we will remain resolute in our determination that he will not be allowed to fulfil his ambitions to develop weapons of mass destruction."

The Tory leader, William Hague, offered "full support" for the action, pledging: "We on this side of the House share your view that you and President Clinton had no alternative but to order a military response to the continuous deceit of Saddam."

George Galloway, Labour MP for Glasgow Kelvin, was



Robin Cook and William Hague find common ground in yesterday's debate on the military strikes against Iraq and Saddam Hussein

jeered by his own party when he said Britain was "diminished and degraded" by its attacks on Iraq.

He told the Prime Minister: "I wonder if you thought, as I did at lunchtime, as the bleeding women and children were carried into hospitals that those who were diminished and degraded were not the Iraqis, but us - diminished and degraded by being reduced to being a tail on this verminous and mangy Desert Fox."

The attack has not been led by Richard the Lionheart, but by Clinton the Liar," he added.

Gerald Kaufman, MP for Manchester Gorton, told MPs that there was a "feeling of nausea" among MPs at the suggestion that Mr Blair was doing a "cronyish favour" for Bill Clinton. He added: "When our meo are being asked to risk their lives that is despicable."

Tam Dalyell, MP for Livingston, echoed his concerns, raising the threat of environmental damage if missiles hit military sites.

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Stuart Bell, Labour MP for Middlesbrough, asked Mr Blair: "Will you recall how German troops were in the Rhineland in 1936? If Adolf Hitler had been stopped then, 20 million people may have not lost their lives."

Parliamentary Labour Party chairman Clive Soley, MP for Ealing Acton, gave the action his full backing, adding that many British Muslims opposed President Saddam.

He said: "Many of them would agree with me in saying that dictators that bave so disfigured the face of the 20th century do need to be stopped. Let us go into the 21st century proud of the role that we have played, difficult though it may be."

But he warned that without "substantial and effective military cover" from the US and UK, this should not be instigated because it could lead to a "great loss of life".

However, Tony Benn,

THE NEW WORDS OF WAR

WORDS ARE weapons of war too - sometimes heavily camouflaged and sometimes naked in their aggressive purpose. And with every war a new device is usually deployed for the first time, to confuse and alarm the enemy.

In the Gulf War most of us learnt the language of "collateral damage" for the first time, a way of saying "charred and dismembered civilians" which wouldn't disrupt the easy, bantering triumph of those locker-room debriefing sessions.

This time, the new arrival on the battlefield is "degraded and diminished", and it has already proved to be a hazardous piece of verbal ordnance, as likely to blow up in the user's face as to concentrate fire on the enemy. The mistake was to allow a

moral ambiguity to be incorporated into what should have been a phrase of clinical and technocratic detachment. That is where "degrade" is borrowed from - from the world of the lab and the white coat. In chemistry it means to reduce a substance to a simpler molecular structure, in geology to wear down rocks, in physics to reduce energy to a less convertible form - all senses which no doubt register the desires of many people with respect to the current Iraqi regime.

Tony Blair has shown a preference for such scientific procedures over the B-movie heroics of other leaders. Where George Bush talked of "a line in the sand" over which Saddam had crossed, Mr Blair noted that the Iraqi

president had failed to meet the UN "benchmarks" for "compliance", as if this was a matter of a dodgy imported kettle which wouldn't get its safety certificate. "Degraded and diminished" sounds as if it is part of this vocabulary, but it admits something unwanted with its moral overtones. Those who use it forget that degrading yourself is bad, degrading others isn't much better, particularly if they simply have the bad luck to be standing next to your real target.

Destroy Saddam Hussein's weapons by all means, shatter his military system. He deserves it. But don't degrade them; the recoil from the phrase is too powerful to make it safe.

TONY SUTCLIFFE

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Extradition: Unprecedented ruling overturns decision that refused former Chilean dictator immunity from prosecution

Law lords allow appeal for Pinochet

FIVE LAW lords took the unprecedented step yesterday of overturning an earlier panel's decision that refused the former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet immunity from prosecution.

The unanimous ruling by the five law lords was greeted with delight by supporters of the general, offering the prospect that he may yet avoid extradition to Spain to face charges of torture, kidnapping and conspiracy to murder.

Lawyers for General Pinochet had successfully argued that the original ruling was flawed because Lord Hoffmann, one of the judges on the panel, had failed to disclose his relationship with Amnesty International. The human rights group had been present as interveners during the hearing and argued that the general should not be protected by immunity.

The House of Lords is supposed to be the court of last resort and its ruling the final word on any case, although it is open to challenge in the European courts. The appeal by General Pinochet's lawyers against the law lords' ruling that he was not immune to prosecution set a precedent of challenging their decisions.

After yesterday's ruling it was revealed that the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, had written to the senior law lord, Lord Browne-Wilkinson, demanding new measures to prevent the situation recurring.

He wrote: "My request to you is that you... ensure that at any time any committee is being composed to hear an appeal that its proposed members consider together whether any of their number might appear to be subject to a conflict of interest, and in order to ensure impartiality, and the appearance of impartiality... require any law lord to disclose any such circumstances to the parties, and

BY KIM SENGUPTA



General Pinochet: A new Lords hearing

not sit if any party objects and the committee so determines."

Lord Hoffmann was yesterday out of the country. One Tory MP, Gerald Howarth, said that he must respect his future. "It is a quite remarkable twist of events and must make Lord Hoffmann question his position as a law lord," he said.

According to legal experts Lord Hoffmann's resignation would only become a strong possibility if the law lords said in their reasoning behind yesterday's decision - due to be published in January - that he had actually demonstrated bias in his decision. No law lord has resigned since the present system was devised in 1876.

Delivering the judgment in the House of Lords, Lord Browne-Wilkinson said: "In the special circumstances of the case, including the fact that Amnesty International was joined as intervener and appeared by counsel before appellate committee, Lord Hoffmann, who did not disclose his links with Amnesty International, was disqualified from sitting."

It was revealed in *The Independent* that solicitors acting for General Pinochet had re-

ceived material earlier this year highlighting Lord Hoffmann's links with Amnesty International. But his lawyers stressed in the Lords that Lord Hoffmann himself should have disclosed the connection, and because he did not General Pinochet remained unaware of them.

A new Lords hearing has been scheduled for the new year. The decision by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, to allow an extradition request from Spain to go ahead, based on the original Lords ruling, remains active. However, the extradition proceedings are now expected to be held in abeyance until the new hearing decides on the question of immunity. Who pays the cost of the various legal actions, said to be running at more than £1m, will also be decided at the conclusion of the case.

The Tory spokesman on home affairs, Sir Norman Fowler, reviewed his call for Mr Straw to send General Pinochet home. "This is a case which should be settled in Chile, not here in Britain," he said. However, the Home Office said yesterday that Mr Straw did not intend to intervene at this stage and would let the legal process take its course.

Amnesty International yesterday expressed disappointment at the decision, but said the legal battle would go on. Baroness Thatcher, who had called for General Pinochet's release, refused to comment on the day's developments.

The leader of the Chilean senate, Andres Zaldivar, said during a visit to Spain he was very pleased with the "positive" decision Carlos Reyes, spokesman for former Chilean political prisoners group Chile Democrático, said: "I am in total shock... From the very beginning I believed justice would be done... Now I am not so sure."

LORD HOFFMANN may be reflecting today how easy it is for a halo to slip. Just three weeks ago, after casting the final and decisive vote against Augusto Pinochet's claim of immunity, he was the toast of the liberal intelligentsia as a pleasantly surprising progressive face of the legal establishment. Yesterday, with that victory turned to ashes, some of the same people were shaking their heads and muttering "Hoffmann should have known better."

After yesterday's 5-0 overturning of the Pinochet judgment by Lord Hoffmann's fellow law lords, one senior lawyer said: "Lennie Hoffmann was no doubt fully confident

down an amendment to change the law on parliamentary privilege, which allowed the MP to sue *The Guardian* for libel.

Lord Hoffmann of Chedworth was born in 1934 to a Jewish family from Mulzenberg, near Cape Town. He went to Cape Town University, and then Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, where he got a first. He taught at Oxford before becoming a barrister and then one of the most sought-after silks, earning more than £50,000 a year by the Eighties.

He married Gillian Stern, much in the news now because of her job with Amnesty International, and they live in a Georgian house in Hampstead, north London.

Lord Hoffmann has a busy and varied social life and has served on the board of English National Opera and on the Arts Council advisory committee on London. Among his other haunts was Stringfellow's night-club, which he began to visit after meeting Peter Stringfellow during a court case, and where he was photographed with Page 3 models.

Lord Hoffmann stopped going to Stringfellow's after he was made the Lord Justice of Appeal in 1992 because of the publicity.

Some will say it is ironic that his present difficulties are the result of links with a far more venerable organisation.

KIM SENGUPTA

Hoffmann's fall from legal grace

BY KIM SENGUPTA

that he would be objective and unbiased, and that's all that mattered to him. He couldn't see it from the point of view of an outsider. It's the sort of lack of common sense that some very bright people suffer from."

The Pinochet case is not the first occasion Lord Hoffmann has been involved in controversial legal action. In one case, his stand was directly opposed to that of Amnesty: sitting on the Privy Council, he refused an appeal against execution of a convicted murderer whose appeal Amnesty had backed.

At the time of the Neil Hamilton "cash for questions" row, it was Lord Hoffmann who put

HOW THE SAGA UNFOLDED

16 October: General Augusto Pinochet arrested in London at a hospital.

22 October: Lawyers for the general mount a legal challenge to his arrest.

24 October: Chilean government formally asks Britain to free him.

28 October: The High Court - with the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, sitting - rules that General Pinochet has immunity from prosecution.

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10 December: General Pinochet's lawyers ask the law lords to set aside the earlier judgment because of Lord Hoffmann's links with Amnesty International.

11 December: General Pinochet appears at Belmarsh magistrates' court, south London, and says he does not recognise the jurisdiction of any court other than Chile's.

17 December: The law lords overturn previous House of Lords ruling. New hearing set for January.

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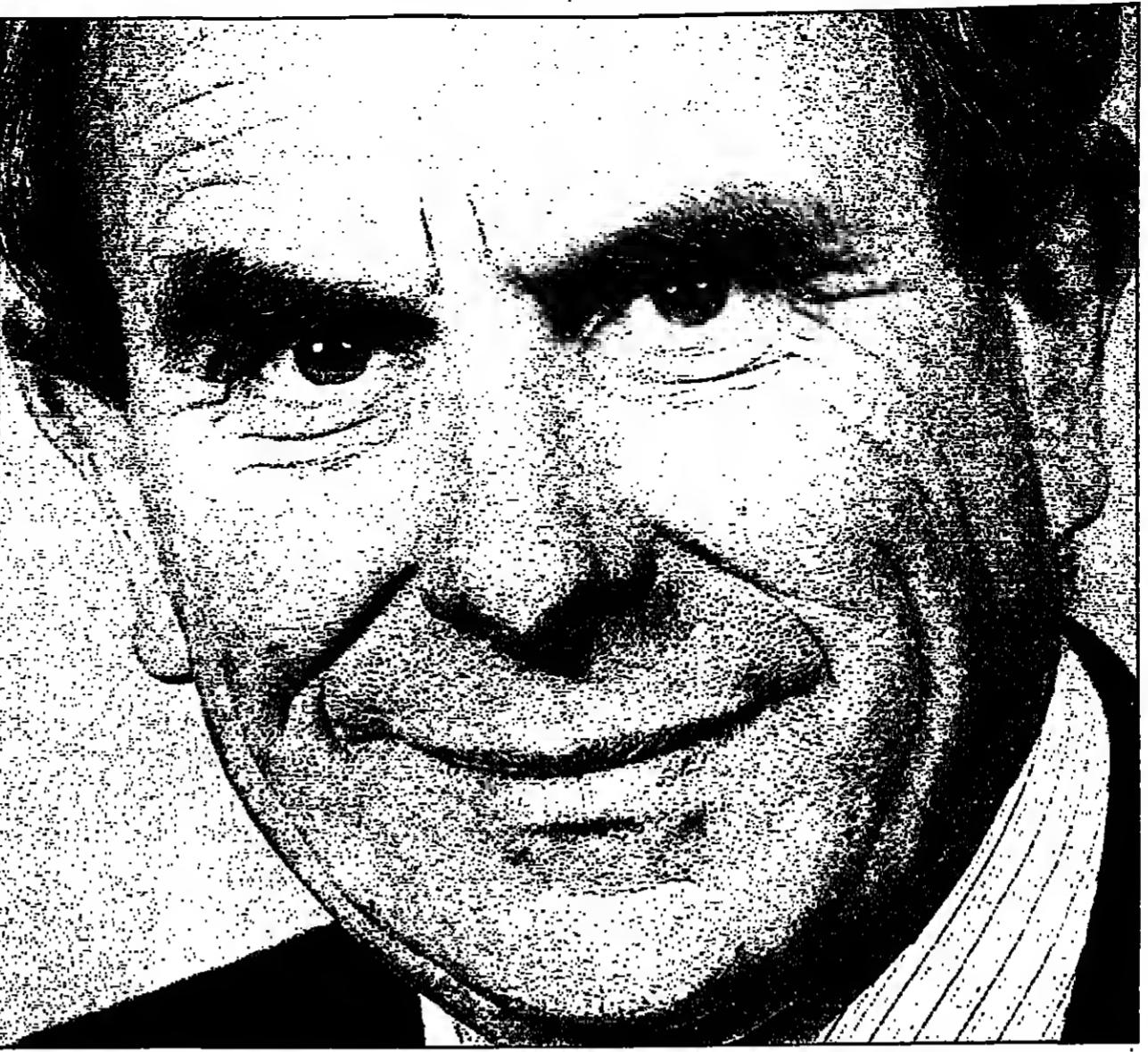
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Lord Hoffmann: Some claim he "should have known better" than to vote against immunity for Pinochet

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THE INDEPENDENT
Friday 18 December 1998

BY PAUL McCARTNEY
MANCHESTER

THE SAGA UNFOLDED

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US cable firm bids for Newcastle

BY PETER THAL LARSEN



A LITTLE-KNOWN American cable operator emerged as the mystery suitor hoping to buy Newcastle United yesterday.

NTL, which runs a network of cable television franchises around the country yesterday paid Douglas Hall, the disgraced Newcastle director, £10m for a 6 per cent stake in the club and took out an option to buy the rest of the Hall family's shareholding and take full control of the club.

The proposed deal values the club at almost £160m, and would see Mr Hall bank a windfall in excess of £90m. His drinking partner and fellow shareholder, Freddie Shepherd, would pocket more than £13m.

If it takes control of Newcastle, NTL has pledged to pump £15m into the football club over five years in order to improve its ailing youth training scheme. It will also support Newcastle's plans to enlarge its St James' Park ground.

Barclay Knapp, the company's American chief executive, said it would respect the supporters. "The fans are our customers and if you know anything about NTL we're very customer-focused," he said.

"We believe strongly that the future success of football will continue to be developed on the enthusiasm and active support of fans."

He added that he thought Newcastle were one of the three or four best teams in the country and could compete

with the best in Europe. However, Mr Knapp, who lives in New York, admitted he had never been to a Newcastle match and preferred to follow the New York Giants American football team.

Freddie Fletcher, Newcastle's chief executive, welcomed the deal as "an important step towards securing the long term success of Newcastle United".

NTL's takeover is dependent on the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's investigation into the £625m takeover of Manchester United by British Sky Broadcasting, the satellite broadcaster. The MMC, which is examining whether the bid is against the public interest, is due to deliver its report by 12 March.

If the MMC clears the BSkyB-Manchester United deal, NTL will be able to exercise an option to buy the remaining 50.8 per cent of Newcastle owned by Camerou Hall Developments, the Hall family firm, for 111.7p per share.

Under Stock Exchange rules, NTL would then have to offer the same terms to the club's remaining shareholders. Fans paid 135p per share when the



Douglas Hall and Freddie Shepherd, Newcastle's disgraced directors, will jointly pocket more than £100m in the proposed deal

club was listed on the Stock Exchange two years ago. Until then, NTL insists it will not be involved in running the club.

A takeover would be a remarkable turnaround for

Hall and Shepherd, who were forced to resign in shame in March after they were exposed as insulting Newcastle's fans.

Last week the duo returned to Newcastle United's board,

prompting the resignation of three other directors and the club's stockbroker.

They have been in talks with NTL for two months but did not have to make the discussions

public because they did not sit on the company's board.

Other media groups have been exploring buying a football club. Carlton and United News, the television companies, have

both been in talks with Arsenal

while Time Warner, the US

giant, is also believed to be in

the hunt for a British club.

News Analysis, Business page 21

1998 is hottest year on record

BY MICHAEL McCARTHY
Environment Correspondent

1998 WAS the warmest year for the world on record, British scientists said yesterday.

It was hotter by a considerable margin than the previous record year, 1997, and means seven of the ten hottest years in a record stretching back to 1860 have been in this decade.

It will give further credence to the belief that global warming, the overheating of the atmosphere by industrial gases such as carbon dioxide from motor vehicles and power stations, is significantly destabilising the world's climate.

The figures were announced jointly yesterday by the Met Office's Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research in Bracknell, Berkshire, and the Climatic Research Unit of the University of East Anglia in Norwich.

They said that the global mean temperature for 1998 is now expected to be 0.58C above the recent long-term average, which is based on the period 1961 to 1990. Last year, the previous record, was 0.43C above the average.

Although Britain experienced a cool and damp summer, many parts of the world, from the Mediterranean to Central America, experienced intense heatwaves in 1998.

Scientists at the Bueoos Aires climate conference in November announced that the year's record sea surface temperatures, up to 2.5C higher than normal, had killed vast swathes of coral in the southern hemisphere.

"The top ten warmest years have all been since 1983," said David Parker, the Hadley head of climate monitoring. "This year has continued the gradual warming trend seen over the past 100 years; global temperatures in the 1990s are almost 0.7C above those at the end of the 19th century."

Night owls earn more than the early risers

EARLY TO bed and early to rise makes a man ... poorer than his late-night neighbour, according to a paper in the *British Medical Journal*.

Children who have had the old maxim chanted at them to justify an early bedtime will rejoice in a survey of 1,200 over 65-year-olds, which found night owls are more likely to have a bigger income and a car than

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

virtuous larks who are in bed by 11 and up before eight.

In research that is published in today's *BMJ*, the scientists looked at a Department of Health and Social Security survey in which data on sleeping patterns, health and socio-economic circumstances had been

recorded. Just under 30 per cent of the group were "larks" (to bed before 11pm and up before 8am) and 26 per cent "owls" (to bed after 11pm and not up till 8am or after).

Famous larks have included Thomas Edison, who believed too much sleep was bad for the health and, appropriately enough, invented the lightbulb. Samuel Johnson cautioned that

"nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good," although the force of his advice was rather diminished by his admission that he invariably lay bed until noon.

The researchers found that owls had larger mean incomes and were more likely to have access to a car. "There was no indication that larks were richer than those with other sleep-

ing patterns," said the scientists. More than 40 per cent of owls had access to a car compared with 34 per cent of larks. Owls were also more likely to have a good standard of accommodation and to come from a non-manual social class.

There was no evidence that health differed for larks, either self-reported or after assessment by a geriatrician. Mortality from all causes was lower in the cases of larks and owls than in other groups, but was broadly similar for both groups.

In fact the scientists said the best way to cut the risk of early death was not to linger between the sheets. Those who slept longer than eight hours in bed a night had an increased risk of death, and while it was unlikely to simply reflect the fact

that the sick spend longer in bed, the underlying biological mechanism was not known.

"We found no evidence ... that going to bed and getting up early was associated with any health, socio-economic or cognitive advantage," the scientists said. "If anything, owls were wealthier than larks, though there was no difference in their health or wisdom."

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On the 12th of March 1761 Mr Harrison, a clockmaker of Longleat, held before my office in Admiralty received certain transactions for his son William, invented directly by him, and that he was to go to sea with his son to the East Indies. His keeper and a £2000 premium were offered to him, from the loss of the old navy was directly engaged to him.

An excerpt from John Harrison's diary with, below, his H1 chronometer and the bestselling book 'Longitude', which chronicles his work

Longitude man's secrets sold

THE DIARY of a Yorkshire clockmaker's struggle to solve the greatest scientific problem of his age was sold at auction for £29,500 yesterday.

John Harrison's 230-year-old journal chronicles the problem he had trying to convince the Commissioners of the Board of Longitude that he had invented a clock that would keep accurate time at sea, something which is essential for calculating longitude. Lacking the ability to measure how far east or west they were meant that sailors were unable to navigate with any accuracy once they lost sight of land.

In 1714 Parliament offered £20,000 to anyone who could

BY KATE WATSON-SMYTH



solve the problem. Harrison's meetings with the board have been well documented in the minutes of their meetings but the story has never been told in his own words.

He wrote the journal, covering the years 1761-66, after building his most successful timekeeper, the H4.

This was impervious to the pitch and roll of ship and changes in temperature and humidity and could keep the precise time at sea. Sailors could then compare the time in Greenwich with the position of the midday sun, calculate how far east or west they were



and plot their position. But each time Harrison tried to claim the prize, the Board of Commissioners found a reason

to deny him and he became even more frustrated. He was finally paid in instalments but was never acknowledged as

the winner. The story became one of the surprise bestsellers of the decade when the American journalist Dava Sobel wrote *Longitude - The True Story of a Lone Genius who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time*.

The journal was written by the inventor's friend Walter Williams, although it is in Harrison's own words, and has corrections in the hand of his son, William. It was expected to fetch up to £150,000.

Sobel's widow, Sue, said: "It is a bit sad that it didn't go crazy but at least it sold. The problem is that no one has any money at this time of year."



A portrait of John Harrison, whose clock allowed accurate navigation at sea

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Firms get progress on union rights

AFTER MONTHS of wrangling, the Government yesterday published critical elements of its plans for compulsory union recognition, which take on board many employers' criticisms of the 'Fairness at Work' white paper published earlier this year.

The full proposals for employment rights, to be published next month, have formed one of the main ideological battle grounds between Old and New Labour. Peter Mandelson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, said the detailed proposals showed the Government was fully committed to principles set out in the White Paper. But his department had listened to concerns to produce "sensible, balanced" legislation.

Adair Turner, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, acknowledged there had been "improvements" in the plans.

John Monks, TUC general secretary, said that while the proposals constituted an "historic" breakthrough for unions, the Government had introduced complexities which could lead to prolonged litigation.

Ken Jackson, the general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, said the Bill would be a "major step forward", but that Britain's "worst employers" would be able to scupper genuine cases for automatic recognition.

Mr Mandelson has adhered to a promise that recognition should be automatic where half a workforce are union members, but with provisos.

While he rejected CBI suggestions that employees would

have to be members for up to 12 months before counting towards recognition, he has given important powers of discretion to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC), which will act as an adjudicator.

While there will be a presumption that 50-per-cent membership should lead to recognition, employers can appeal if they believe it would impair "sustainable and good" industrial relations or if they thought union members did not necessarily support collective bargaining.

The Trade Secretary would also have the right to "issue guidance" to the CAC. He also decided individual representation should only be allowed where grievance procedures involved "statutory, contractual or common-law rights".

Instead of abolishing the upper limit on compensation for unfair dismissal, he has decided to increase it from £12,000 to £20,000. Rupert Murdoch's plans to create an in-house staff association at his Wapping plant would fall foul of the new laws, aimed at ensuring the independence of employees' organisations.

However, any attempt to win collective bargaining rights at Marks & Spencer stores, another key target for the labour movement, were undermined by a stipulation that unions would need 10-per-cent membership before they would be able to trigger a ballot on recognition. Unions acknowledge privately they have minimal membership at M&S shops.

Sweetest recipe for a longer life

LIFE IS SWEET - and about to get sweeter for chocoholics, now that doctors have shown that they can live longer if they indulge their desires.

A study into 7,841 American men found that those who regularly ate chocolate and sweets lived almost a year longer than those who abstained.

Doctors from the Harvard School of Public Health assessed the subjects' sweet consumption in 1988, when they were, on average, 65, and then tracked them for five years.

"Our attitude towards candy - if it tastes good it can't be healthy - betrays society's puritanical stance towards pleasure," Dr I-Min Lee and Dr Ralph S Paffenbarger Jr write in today's *British Medical Journal*. "Since it has existed for centuries, we surmised it cannot be totally unhealthy. We decided to investigate whether

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

candy consumption was associated with longevity."

Death rates were found to be lowest among the men who ate sweets one to three times a month, and highest among those who abstained.

The doctors write that their findings reflect the fact that chocolate contains chemicals known as phenols. These mop up unstable oxidising molecules, known as free radicals, that are linked to a wide range of diseases. They also prevent the oxidation of low-density lipoproteins into a form that clogs up the coronary arteries.

Unfortunately for those planning a chocolate binge, the scientists had a warning.

"As with most things in life, moderation (in sweet eating) seems to be paramount."

VIAGRA

Dr. JAMES F...

FAMILY DOCTORS will be able to prescribe Viagra on the NHS

their new medical body

Frank G. Thompson, Secretary

State for Health, says to li

ban on the anti-imperme

drug within a month.

Pollard fears that

NHS would not be able to

meet demand for

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The British Medical As

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NHS,

Hyde Park 'bomber' wins appeal

AN IRISHMAN jailed as the "master bomb-maker" behind the 1982 Hyde Park bombing in central London that killed four soldiers had his conviction quashed yesterday.

But controversially the three Court of Appeal judges stressed that their ruling did not mean that Danny McNamee, who spent 11 years in jail, was innocent of the charge.

Mr McNamee, 38, from Crossmaglen, South Armagh, who was sentenced to 25 years for his alleged part in the bombing which killed four members of the Household Cavalry and seven horses, was the first person convicted of a terrorist offence in England to be freed early under the Good Friday Agreement.

Yesterday, the Court of Appeal ruled that his conviction for conspiracy to cause explosions was unsafe.

However, the judges also announced that it did "not at all follow" that he was innocent of the charge "or that he has served 11 years imprisonment for a crime which it has been found that he did not commit".

Lord Justice Swinton Thomas, sitting with Mr Justice Garland and Mr Justice Longmore, said that on the totality of the evidence against Mr McNamee, the prosecution had made out a "strong case" at his 1987 Old Bailey trial that he was guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions.

But the judges concluded that the conviction was unsafe because "we cannot be sure that the jury would have

BY JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

reached the conclusion that they were sure of guilt" if they had heard the fresh evidence raised during the recent appeal hearing.

The fresh material before the court had related to fingerprints that belonged to convicted bomb-maker Desmond Ellis, which Mr McNamee's lawyers said seriously undermined the Crown's case against their client.

After the court's ruling, Mr McNamee, surrounded by family and supporters said: "Of course I'm vindicated. It's proved I was not guilty, even in a really grudging way."

He said the judges had to be dragged kicking and screaming into delivering the ruling. "You would have thought they were interested in why the false case was brought, but the fact is they do not care," he said.

Hugging and kissing well-wishers he confirmed he would be seeking compensation for his time spent in jail. He added: "It was important to show what had been done. The prosecution had presented a completely false case against me."

In their 36-page written judgment, delivered following a 13-day hearing, the judges ruled that there had been a failure to disclose relevant evidence at Mr McNamee's trial and this amounted to a "material irregularity".

During the hearing, Mr McNamee's counsel, Michael

Mansfield QC, said that Desmond Ellis was the source of a "significant proportion" of the fingerprints found on bomb making devices.

Mr Mansfield revealed that circuit boards with identical "art-work" to those which had formed such a significant part of the case against Mr McNamee had been found in the possession of Ellis in 1981, but had not been disclosed at the trial.

Lord Justice Swinton Thomas said that the court had not given a ruling on whether vital information had been deliberately withheld from the original trial.

Danny McNamee, cleared yesterday of the Hyde Park bombing in 1982 that left four cavalrymen and seven horses dead

PA



Haughey £2m tax concession is condemned

IRELAND'S CENTRE and left opposition parties yesterday united in their condemnation of the unexplained reduction of a £2m tax assessment to zero against former Taoiseach Charles Haughey.

The Dail held a special debate following the revelation that tax commissioner Ronan Kelly, the brother-in-law of current Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, had made the tax ruling, despite a judicial tribunal's finding that Mr Haughey had received gifts of at least £1.3m from businessman Ben Dunne.

The Labour leader Ruairi Quinn said ordinary taxpayers feel "fooled and duped", while the Democratic Left party's finance spokesman Pat Rabbitte said that, given the "cavalier fashion" finance minister Charles McCreevy had dismissed the affair, "I suppose we should be thankful Mr Haughey didn't ask for a rebate."

Mr Rabbitte added, "when Mr Haughey paraded his retinue like an Arab sheikh around this country for so many years, the Revenue Commissioners are expected to appeal against the decision in the courts."

BY ALAN MURDOCH
in Dublin

could never see anything wrong with it. It never occurred to them to ask any questions."

John Gormley of the Green Party said people seeing Mr Haughey's portrait in the Dail "invariably ask the question 'what is it doing there?' Charles J Haughey looks down at us with that imperious stare, and what does it say? It says 'you are mere minions. I am above you. I am the law.' Well let the message go out today, your day will come."

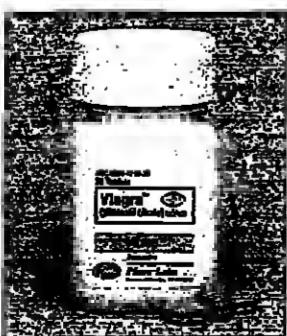
In response, Mr Ahern said he had had no contact with Mr Kelly about the Haughey case and he rejected any suggestion that his brother-in-law had acted with anything other than "professional integrity".

Mr Ahern said: "The decision came as a complete surprise to me, as it did to everyone. I have no insight into either the details of this case or of the decision."

Revenue Commissioners are expected to appeal against the decision in the courts.

VIAGRA CORNER

DISPATCHES FROM THE FRONTIERS OF MEDICINE



FAMILY DOCTORS will be advised to carry on prescribing Viagra on the NHS by their professional body if Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health, fails to lift a ban on the anti-impotence drug within a month.

Following fears that the NHS would not be able to afford to meet demand for the drug, ministers ordered doctors in September to stop prescribing the drug on the NHS.

The British Medical Association's GP committee decided last night to give Mr Dobson a month in which to produce new advice, or they will issue their own guidance to GPs to carry on prescribing Viagra on the NHS.

The BMA is concerned that the ban, imposed by Mr Dobson on 14 September, breaks GPs' terms of contract to provide care on the NHS.

"We discussed issuing advice today but we gave Mr Dobson another month. Our advice is to ignore the Government's guidance and to carry on prescribing Viagra where clinically appropriate," said a BMA source.

The Department of Health expects to release fresh guidance in January which is likely to allow GPs to carry on prescribing.

COLIN BROWN

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ADVERTISING

Opera House gets grant rise to £16m

THE ROYAL Opera House is to become far and away the most lavishly funded arts venue in Britain after a major rise in its grant was announced yesterday.

In return, the ROH has agreed a deal under which it will reduce seat prices and increase public access.

The radical new arts budget announced by the Arts Council chairman, Gerry Robinson, also includes rewarding the National Theatre for excellence with a 9 per cent or 11m rise, and giving similar uplifts for quality to the Birmingham, London, and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestras.

But the Royal Shakespeare Company, which has followed government and Arts Council wishes by doing far more work in the regions, is punished with only a 5 per cent grant increase.

Mr Robinson said the RSC

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

needed help and had problems: "We will be meeting in the new year to talk about it. Their problems are substantial and not even an increase of 10 per cent would have been enough to sort them out." He added that the RSC had "tried to do too much".

An RSC spokesman said: "We will not be able to balance the budgets in the year 1999-2000 on this grant increase. Our problem has been that our grant has been eroded by 15 per cent over the past five years."

The key message in the overall grant's announcement is that the days of across the board increases of the same percentage are over. Organisations deemed to be performing well are being rewarded with large increases.

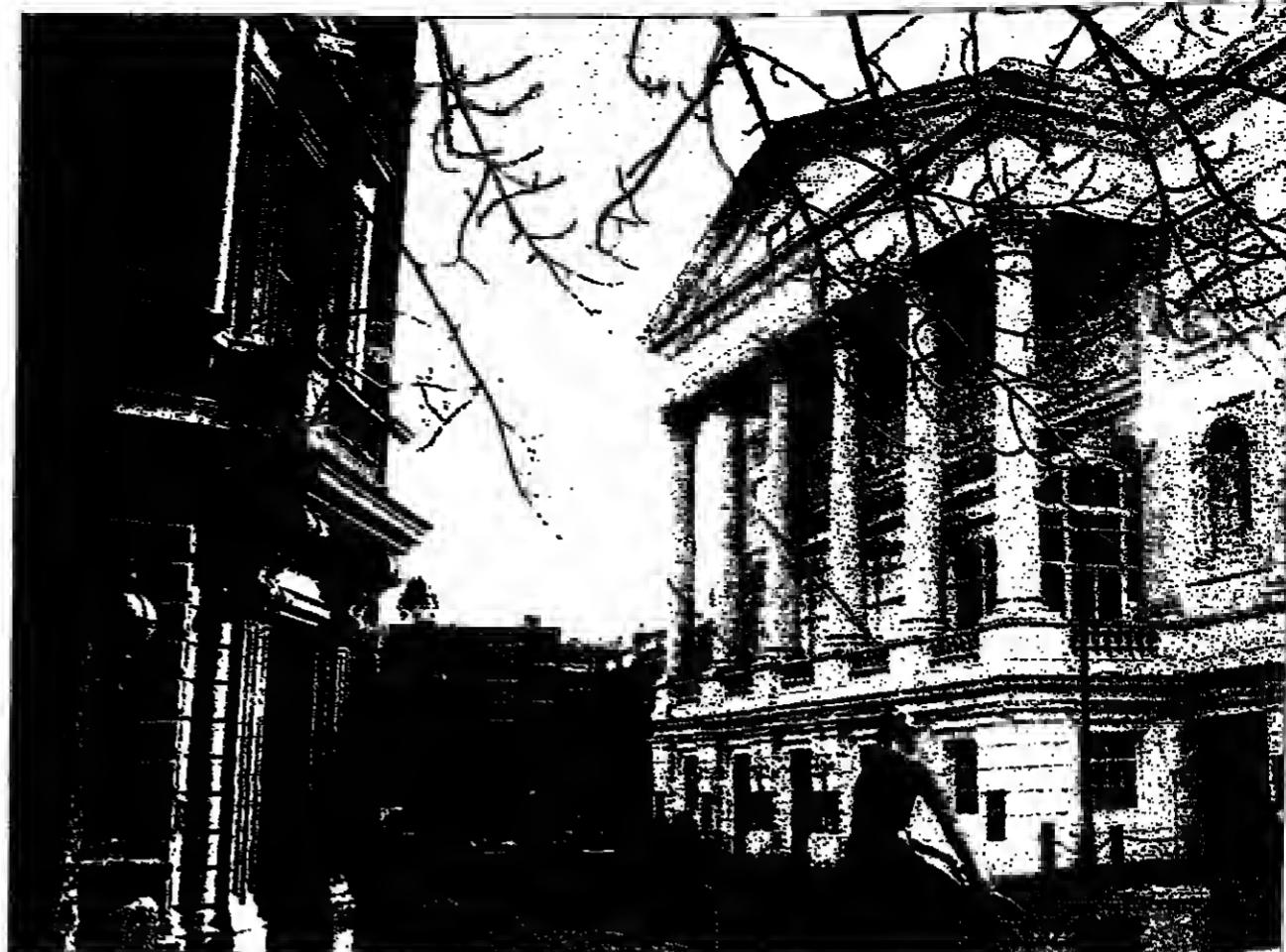
Those thought to be doing badly get the minimum.

The exception is the Royal Opera House which, as expected, gets a massive increase to put its house in order, though less than the doubling of its grant that its chairman Sir Colin Soothgate was satisfied with the plans.

Yesterday's grants decisions were condemned by the Independent Theatre Council which represents 80 per cent of the touring drama companies funded by the Arts Council.

ITC director Nicola Thorold said that only standstill funding had been given to all the black and Asian companies and half of the specialist educational companies. She said it was "indefensible".

Mr Robinson also indicated a rift between him and Culture Secretary Chris Smith over the latter's decision to form an efficiency squad in the Culture Department.



The Royal Opera House's Covent Garden site is being rebuilt at a cost of £218 million, £78 million of which is lottery money
Brian Harris

Monsanto to be prosecuted over crops

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

Caistor Magistrates Court in Lincolnshire is to hear the case next month and, if found guilty, Monsanto faces a fine of up to £20,000, or an unlimited fine if the case goes to a Crown Court.

Monsanto yesterday said it regretted the breach of consent and that it had taken immediate steps to limit any potential environmental impact.

The company said that the subcontractors appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to run the trial had confirmed in writing that the trial complied with all relevant requirements.

One of these requirements was that the site should be surrounded by a six metre pollen border. The border was in place at the beginning of the trial, but part of it was later moved in error by one of the contractors, Monsanto said.

The company subsequently destroyed the entire crop of modified oilseed rape.

Adrian Benn, a campaigner with Friends of the Earth, said biotechnology companies have been breaking the law at test sites and putting the countryside at risk. "It is ironic that the government is also trying to reach voluntary agreements with the very same companies they are prosecuting," he said.

Cervical cancer 50% higher if no screening

BY GLENDA COOPER
Social Affairs Correspondent

Around 85 per cent of all women attend screenings, up from over 20 per cent in 1987/8 when the programme began. Around 4.5 million smears are examined every year.

"We are not going to pretend we haven't had problems," said Julietta Patnick, national co-ordinator of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme.

"But what you see here is a very successful programme, a falling number of cases, a falling number of deaths, a reversal of trends."

Baroness Hayman said the Government had been responsible for a radical shake-up which would result in improvements in training staff and reporting back.

"Every woman would like a guarantee of health from the results but that is not possible," she said. "As the report suggests, screening can greatly reduce the risk but never eliminate it completely."

ROBERT FISK



If inspectors couldn't find the weapons, how come we knew where to fire?
IN THE FRIDAY REVIEW PAGE 5

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He's back!

Banana 'fled death plot' in Zimbabwe

BY MARY BRAID

CANAAAN BANANA, Zimbabwe's former president, has alleged that he jumped bail shortly before his conviction for sodomy last month because members of the Zimbabwean government planned to kill him.

In the latest twist in a bizarre saga, Mr Banana, convicted of 11 counts of sodomy, attempted sodomy and indecent assault, told the independent *Zimbabwean Financial Gazette* that he fled to South Africa last month because of plans to eliminate him. He said he had "dangerous information" which he wanted to share with his real friends.

It was unclear yesterday whether South Africa had handed Mr Banana to Zimbabwe under an extradition treaty between the two countries. Mr Banana may have returned home voluntarily. But yesterday he was under house arrest, until sentencing on 23 December.



Banana: Claims to have 'dangerous information'

His stay in South Africa and a decision by President Nelson Mandela to see him placed great strain on already tense political relations between the two countries.

Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe and Mr Mandela have been at loggerheads over Zimbabwe's decision to send troops into Congo in defence of President Laurent Kabila. But domestic attitudes

to homosexuality also divide the two countries. In Zimbabwe, where homosexuality is banned, Mr Mugabe has described gays as "lower than pigs", whereas South Africa protects gay rights under its new constitution.

Not that Mr Banana, a Methodist minister, was looking for a gay support group to take up his case. He has always denied the charges against him, claiming they were trumped up by political enemies.

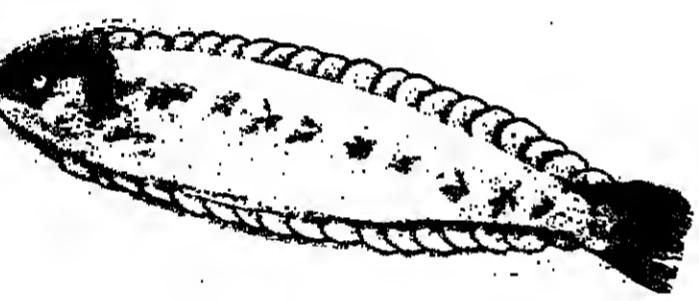
The charges proved against him carry a jail sentence of up to 22 years. However, there is speculation that he will receive a light sentence, or even a pardon, after Mr Mandela revealed that he and Mr Mugabe had reached a "common position" on Mr Banana.

During his 17-day trial one of Mr Banana's alleged victims described how the former president had danced with him before drugging him and raping him on a carpet in the State House library.



A keeper wiping behind a painting of Lenin after a leak at Kiev's Fine Arts museum yesterday. An exhibition of Soviet art opens today. Reuters

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Israelis favour outsider for PM

BY ERIC SILVER
in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S ELECTION campaign opened yesterday with a dark horse, who has not yet entered the race or named his colours, leading the field.

In a Gallup poll, taken immediately after the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced his decision to go to the country next spring, Amnon Shahak, who retired earlier this year as army chief of staff, was 11 per cent clear in a straight contest with Mr Netanyahu. The right-wing leader of Likud polled 37 per cent to 48 per cent for Mr Shahak.

The survey is bad news for the Labour opposition contender, Ehud Barak. He led Mr Netanyahu by only three points (44 to 41) in single combat. When voters were offered a choice of all three, 36 per cent backed Mr Netanyahu, 27 per cent Mr Barak and 25 per cent Mr Shahak. If that were the result in a three-way contest on polling day, the vote for prime minister would go to a second round with the third candidate eliminated.

Mr Shahak's main claim to the voters' affection is that he is neither Mr Netanyahu nor Mr Barak, two abrasive personalities whose arrogant, dictatorial ways have a habit of losing friends and alienating people.

By contrast, Mr Shahak, who fought in an elite commando unit alongside both his rivals, is genial and articulate with a reputation for quiet efficiency. Like Mr Barak, he is identified with the liberal left, but so far he has declined all invitations to join his old comrade and commander as number two on the Labour slate.

After years of marching one step behind Mr Barak, he wants to be his own man. Although he is still officially on demobilisation leave from the army, he opened a campaign

office in Tel Aviv this week and is expected to resign his commission soon and announce his candidacy for prime minister at the head of a new centre party.

Leah Rabin, widow of the former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, is putting her weight behind efforts to bring Mr Shahak into the Barak camp. Both men are protégés in the army and in their political aspirations of the assassinated Labour premier. Mr Barak still hopes to win him over.

One of the Labour leader's senior aides said yesterday: "We are not going to plead with Shahak. He knows we'll be glad if he joins us. He knows if he does, he'll probably get the defence portfolio. He has said he is only going into politics to get rid of Netanyahu. Our message to him is that the only way to do that is to fight together, not to fight each other."

Mr Netanyahu was elected in 1996 on a platform at odds with the land-for-peace formula that Labour endorsed in its landmark 1993 Oslo accord with the Palestinians. He has seen his coalition crumble since October when he signed the Wye Agreement which included a deal on withdrawing from part of the occupied Territories.

IN BRIEF

German eagle lands on Reichstag

AN EAGLE, the symbol of Germany, was installed on top of the Reichstag in Berlin yesterday. The parliament's president, Wolfgang Thierse, oversaw the unveiling of the two-and-a-half-ton aluminium bird. At 26ft by 21ft, the eagle is 60 per cent bigger than its counterpart in Bonn.

National Front MEPs back Le Pen

NINE OF the French National Front's 12 MEPs pledged to continue backing the leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who has been undermined by a power struggle that has split his far-right party. The nine said in a statement that the three others, including the Front's rebel deputy leader Bruno Megret, no longer represented the Front in Strasbourg.

Suicide over Christmas tree

A 50-YEAR-OLD Romanian man killed himself because he could not afford a Christmas tree for his 10-year-old daughter. Christmas trees in Romania cost between £3 and £12. As average monthly salaries are about £6, only about one in 10 Romanians can afford them.

Protests in Jakarta

BY CLAUDIO LIMA
in Jakarta

PROTESTS against the government and foreign investors flared yesterday in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, as students demanding political reforms blocked roads and burned foreign-owned vehicles. One student was shot dead and 10 injured, and a gunman wounded another. About 60 were arrested, and three others beaten by police. Most were beaten in the streets by angry mobs.

Some 100,000 students and trade unionists marched through central Jakarta yesterday. One student was shot dead and 10 injured, and a gunman wounded another. About 60 were arrested, and three others beaten by police. Most were beaten in the streets by angry mobs.

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China's 20-year affair with capitalism

TWENTY YEARS ago, Li Yan was a fresh-faced schoolgirl well-drilled in Maoist propaganda. "At school we were told two-thirds of the world's population was still suffering and miserable, and that we Chinese were working to stop their suffering." She laughs, incredulous at the memory.

Now 32, Ms Li works in the central city of Chongqing for a local branch of a Western multi-national, having abandoned her poorly paid local-government job. Dressed in a Western business suit, she is a thoroughbred product of the reform era, fluent in English, and enthusiastic about China's October signing of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

"It is really good that something is being done on human rights. I think this is really important, if the government can open up." She is, in short, the sort of mainland Chinese who would have been unimaginable two decades ago.

Today, China celebrates the 20th anniversary of the start of its reform process. On 18 December 1978, after two years of political manoeuvring, Deng Xiaoping convened a critical party conclave where he finally routed the diehard Maoists and set China on the road to the market.

The process has transformed the lives of China's vast population, now 1.3 billion.

Chinese Communist propaganda routinely describes the progress of the past two decades as "miraculous", but Deng's main achievement was to restore the possibility of normality in a country ravaged by the economic and human tragedy of the 1956-76 Cultural Revolution.

In a keynote speech marking the occasion today, President Jiang Zemin will dwell on the benefits of reform, many of which are undeniable. To quote just one statistic popular in the blizzard of propaganda running up to the anniversary: In 1980, fewer than 1 per cent of households owned televisions. By last year, there were 100.5 sets per 100 homes.

But away from their televisions, ordinary Chinese have less to celebrate. As China heads for the 21st century, its economy has slowed amid the Asian financial crisis and long-postponed structural reforms have yet to be accomplished. State enterprises continue to drain the public account, with nearly half of them in the red; much of the state-run banking sector is insolvent; and none of these problems can be addressed without throwing yet more millions out of work.

Rampant corruption undermines the best attempts of the central government to tackle the debris of the command economy.

Most sensitive is the unresolved question of whether the next, much more difficult, economic reforms can take place without a parallel political opening. Liu Ji, a former vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, wrote in

BY TERESA POOLE
in Peking

a mainland newspaper this week: "To transform China into a modernised country, we must take the next step, which is political reform ... China has made some progress in political reform, but so far its pace has somehow lagged behind that of the economic reform."

To dampen expectations of anyone reading this unusually bold view, he added that "the establishment of socialist democracy will take generations".

In the meantime, yesterday brought a sharp reminder of what still remains from the era when a population lived in fear of an unexpected knock on the door. Two high-profile dissidents went to trial for "inciting the subversion of state power", part of an aggressive crackdown on activists who have tried to register their China Democracy Party.

In the eastern city of Hangzhou, 200 people defied bans and gathered outside the court-room to show support for 32-year-old Wang Youcui. One woman carried a banner with the Chinese characters reading "protest". In the city of Wuhan, two supporters were detained as Qin Yongmin, 49, went on trial.

In many ways, human rights in China have improved over the past 20 years, but only for those who do not question the Communist Party's monopoly of power. Personal freedoms – to choose a job, move around the country, or even divorce – are taken for granted. But life remains a complicated struggle for Mao's "masses", because of the yawning chasm between the upbeat official version of market reform and reality.

Take the peasants of Persimmon village, on the outskirts of Chongqing city, past the "California Garden Bowling Centre". Pang Lianghui, 41, recalled the late 1970s. "We were employed by the commune, and we earned work points according to how long we worked in the fields. Farm production was not enough, so we ate weeds. That was common, as were deaths due to malnutrition."

Deng's return of farming plots to individual families transformed Persimmon village's economy and living standards soared.

Now, however, comes the challenge of market forces. The local township has requisitioned the peasants' land to build apartment blocks for Chongqing's overspill. The cadres have offered compensation and replacement housing. But many villagers worry whether the money will ever be paid, and have no idea how they will earn a living without land when the cash runs out. "After the property development, our living standards will fall back to 20 years ago," said one man.

In another world, on the pavements of Peking, it is a different kind of loser: Wang Yongli, 38, described how he had been laid off 18 months ago in

the north-east rustbelt city of Harbin from his job in an overmanned state grain-storage depot. "There are no jobs in Harbin," he said.

So earlier this year, Mr Wang said goodbye to his family and journeyed to the capital, where he joined the army of unemployed who illegally hawk goods on the pavements. He sells scarves for 10 yuan each (75p). In between police swoops, he needs to sell 10 a day to make a subsistence living.

There are already more than 10 million urban unemployed in China who are trying to eke out an existence in this way, and the number is going to rise steadily.

As China marks today's milestone, it can claim that everyone benefited from the first phase of economic reform, though to greatly differing degrees. The Communist Party's challenge for the next decade is how to manage a society in wrenching transition, where there will be a large number of losers who now want the free-dom to complain.



Two Chinese bikers wearing the latest US styles in Canton; but Western fashion cannot help those impoverished after 20 years of reform *Reuter*

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PHILIP HENSHER

I suppose putting a man on the Moon was interesting, but is Mother Teresa?

IN THE FRIDAY REVIEW

PAGE 4

Poor country with a taste for fast cars

EUROPEAN TIMES

DURRES, ALBANIA

HIS NAME is Urim and he can offer you a red £25,000 Mercedes, less than one year old, for £5,000. Or perhaps you would prefer a classic metallic green model, £40,000 in the UK. Yours for £2,000.

Urim has lots of other Mercedes, plus the odd BMW and Toyota, all at temptingly low prices. Snag is the cars are all stolen from the wealthier parts of Europe – and they can only be bought and driven in Albania.

Urim is one of the handful of shifty salesmen whose showroom is a bumpy field outside the Albanian port of Durres. They have more than 100 stolen cars for sale and most of them are Mercedes, polished to a mirror-shine by young boys while would-be buyers haggle over prices.

Albania may be Europe's poorest country, plagued by a daily round of murders and power cuts, but it is also the Mercedes capital of the world, home to more of the prestigious German cars per capita than Germany itself.

Three out of every five cars in Albania are "Mercs", some

of them powerful and expensive models, others battered and rusting. Dealers are reluctant to open up shop in Albania, so spare parts are hard to come by. Most are sold at roadside stalls, and they have usually been stolen from other Mercedes.

In the capital Tirana, the Mercedes is the favourite taxi, the preferred family car and the supreme status symbol. But at least 80 per cent are stolen, often to order, by ruthless and highly organised professional gangs, linked to Albania's growing drugs and arms trades, according to police.

Major hire-car companies have pulled out of Albania because their cars were all stolen by thieves with false ID and cloned credit cards.

The evidence is in the statistics; the number of cars in Albania has soared since the collapse of Communism, from 5,000 in the early Nineties, to 500,000 today. Yet last year only three new cars were registered, down even the patently 99 the year before that, according to official figures.

The cars, often with very

Everybody knows the cars are stolen but nobody seems to care. "In Albania you're a mug if you buy a Mercedes legally," said Urim, giving the green Mercedes' bonnet an affectionate pat.

Many of the Mercedes still have the D (for Deutschland) or CH (Switzerland) sticker on the back, denoting the real owner's nationality. The new owners soon add AL stickers, often without even bothering to remove the other labels.

Such impunity goes unpunished. The police turn a blind eye and some are involved in the trade. Customs officials are urged to be vigilant when the cars are brought in, but they are easily bribed or intimidated by criminals.

The newly elected Socialist government has shown little more desire than its predecessor to halt the wholesale import of stolen cars. Some MPs even claim that the growth in Mercedes ownership is a barometer of the nation's prosperity and therefore of the government's success.

The cars, often with very

few miles on the clock, are usually taken from German cities such as Frankfurt, Munich and Bonn but also from Switzerland, Italy and Greece. British cars are targeted less because they are right-hand drive but there are prestigious exceptions: two years ago a stolen British-owned gold-coloured Rolls-Royce was spotted being driven into Albania from the Greek border,

after the customs officers had been paid off.

Britain plays another role too; thousands of cars stolen on the Continent are taken to British container ports to create a complicated paper trail to disguise their route to Albania and other Eastern European countries.

The cars from Western Europe are usually stolen at night and have reached Slovenia by

the time their owners have discovered the theft. From there they are driven to the Croatian port of Rijeka and on to the ferry to Durres. Croatian customs and police order a few cars of the ferries but most are allowed to continue to Albania. Once in Albania the cars are virtually untraceable. Out of 110,000 cars stolen in Germany last year, some 42,000 remain untraced. "We know a lot of them are in Albania," said a German federal police spokesman in Wiesbaden. "But without the co-operation of the Albanian authorities we cannot just go in and get them. It would be too difficult and too dangerous."

Taking the cars back out of Albania is more difficult since it involves the risk that European Union customs officials might check their databases of

stolen cars. It can also be embarrassing. The Albanian central bank's former governor, Mr Hoti, took his official Mercedes to Italy only to be told by Italian police, who checked their computer records, that it was on the stolen list. The car was confiscated but was later returned to the governor, apparently because the owner could not be traced.

DAVID HARRISON



Arben Celi/Reuters

MEPs reject budget after fraud row

EUROPE yesterday delivered a humiliating rebuff to the European Commission, refusing to approve a set of annual accounts and paving the way for a vote next month on whether to sack all 20 commissioners.

The unexpected act of militancy came after months of tension over accusations of fraud and mismanagement in the Commission's multi-million pound annual budget.

The vote, in which MEPs

BY STEPHEN CASTLE
in Brussels

refused to sign off a set of EU accounts dating from 1996, has no effect on the Commission's day-to-day finances, and the motion, which would lead to the resignation of the commissioners, is unlikely to achieve the necessary two-thirds majority. Nevertheless, yesterday's vote was a blow to the prestige of the Commission

and its president, Jacques Santer. In all, 270 of the 518 present voted to withhold approval of the accounts against 223 and 23 abstentions.

The censure motion will be debated in January at the request of Pauline Green, leader of the socialist group, the majority of whose members wanted to agree the accounts.

She argued that failure to rubber-stamp the budget amounted to a vote of no-

confidence in the Commission, and that a censure motion was needed to clear the air. Most socialists, including Ms Green, will back the Commission.

All seven previous attempts to censure the European Commission, the last in 1981, have been defeated or withdrawn.

Edward McMillan-Scott, leader of the Conservative MEPs who argued against approval of the accounts, said: "This was the strongest con-

demation of the European Commission since I was elected in 1984. I believe specific commissioners should consider their positions following the vote."

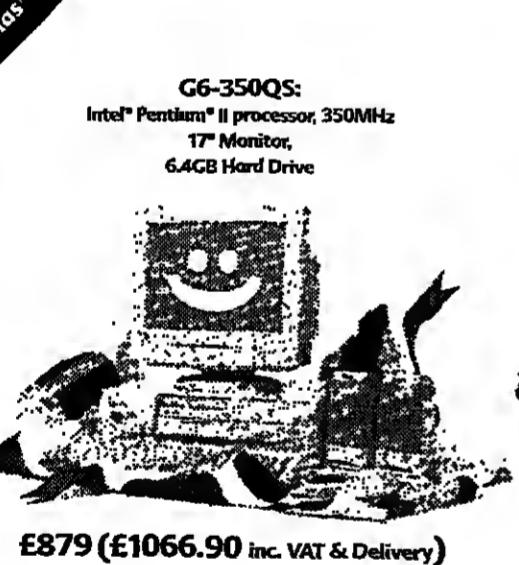
Parliamentarians have complained that the Commission has not gone far enough to guarantee regular fraud reports, to keep national justice officials informed of investigations or to create an independent anti-fraud office.

Relic's guards grilled

BY FRANCIS KENNEDY
in Rome

THE INVESTIGATION is now reported also to include the Deputazione di San Gennaro, a committee of lay people who oversee the maintenance of San Gennaro's chapel and the management of the saint's real estate, much of it bequeathed by donors in their wills.

The archbishop Michele Giurdano, is under investigation by prosecutors in Lagonegro, Basilicata, inquiring into a usury racket.



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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

OECD warns on growth

ANOTHER stock market tumble on the scale of the worldwide slide in August and September could knock 0.75 percentage point or more off annual growth in industrialised countries, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said yesterday. The OECD, which believes the risk of a renewed decline in equity prices is considerable, estimated that a 20 per cent fall across the Group of Seven biggest national economies could take one percentage point or more off US growth. It warned risks of this were possibly stronger now than when it flagged the issue a month ago in the preliminary version its Economic Outlook, which was published in the final version yesterday.

The impact on the other leading economies would be somewhat smaller, with the UK seen as withstanding the effects of a worldwide equity slump for the first 12 months, although if G7 equity markets fell by 20 per cent it could wipe almost 1 per cent off UK growth within two years.

Arriva names new chief

 ARRIVA, the UK's third largest bus operator, has appointed Bob Davies as its chief executive. Mr Davies, who was chief executive of Eastern Electricity until its recent acquisition by PowerGen, will replace Gordon Hughes, who retires on 30 December.

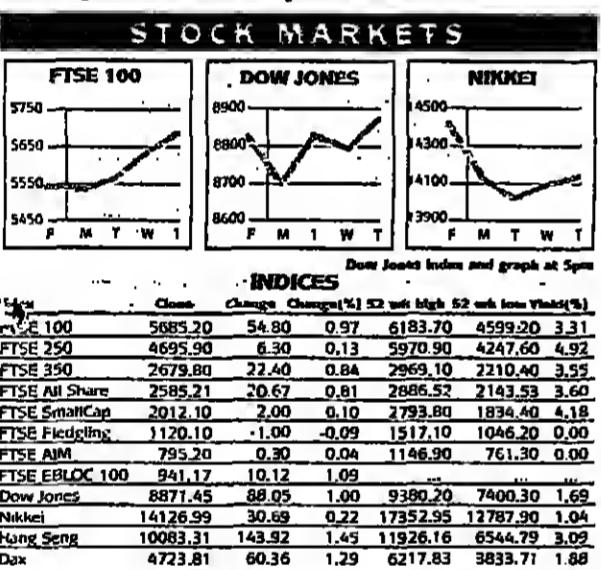
The appointment of Mr Davies, 50, follows pressure from institutional shareholders that the company should move as quickly as possible to name a replacement for Hodgson, who said in July that he would step down. Arriva, the former Cowie, issued warnings earlier this year that profits would fall short of expectations.

Mr Davies was chief executive of East Midlands Electricity until it was acquired by PowerGen earlier this year. He joined East Midlands in 1994 as group finance director.

Previously, he had spent 15 years at Ford Motor and its credit unit in the UK, Spain and the US.

Euro confuses consumers

WITH the launch of the European single currency just a few weeks away, many European consumers are still confused about the value of the euro. According to a survey by European Insight, the consultants, French and Italian consumers found it particularly difficult to convert correctly their local currency into the euro.



Troubled FSA enlists enforcers

THE FINANCIAL Services Authority (FSA) yesterday outlined plans for a new impartial enforcement committee encompassing representatives from the City and the wider community.

The move is aimed at defusing widespread criticism in the City and the legal profession about potential abuse of the FSA's wide-ranging powers.

Howard Davies, the chairman of the new financial services watchdog, said yesterday that he believed the proposals would meet the concerns expressed since the draft Financial Services and Markets Bill was published in June - about whether the FSA's procedures were consistent with "natural justice".

Mr Davies pointed out that anyone contesting the FSA's findings would also have recourse to both an independent tribunal to be set up by the Lord Chancellor's office and a judicial review.

"We recognise the concerns that have been expressed as to how we shall exercise our powers. It is clear that we need to demonstrate accountability, transparency, and fairness in all our processes," he said.

He added: "The aim is to present an approach which is fair, not too costly and able to respond to mischief effectively and efficiently."

Legal experts have warned that the legislation as currently drafted would make the FSA in effect "judge and jury" in deciding whether to fine or suspend individuals and firms.

This is a clear breach of the European Convention of Human Rights which lays down the rights of defendants to have their case heard impartially.

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

The concern has been heightened by the fact that, unlike the Securities and Investments Board which it replaces, the FSA is a statutory body. It also has the power to impose unlimited fines on both firms and individuals as well as lifetime bans.

The Bill allows for the first time people outside the financial services industry to be disciplined for market abuses which are not serious enough to warrant criminal action.

Because of the complexity of the legislation, the Government has proposed that the Bill be scrutinised by a joint committee of both Houses before being put before the House of Commons next year.

In its latest consultation document *Financial Services Regulation: Enforcing the new regime*, the FSA yesterday recommended that the enforcement committee, which would be directly responsible to the FSA board, would have the final say in whether to proceed with action against a firm or individuals. It would also serve as a tribunal to which those under threat of suspension or fine could put their case.

According to the consultation document, the enforcement committee should include both "practitioners" and "public interest representatives".

These would be drawn from a panel of people appointed by the board to sit on the committee. The committee would most probably have a full-time chairman.

Philip Thorpe, the director in charge of enforcement, said



Howard Davies, chairman of the Financial Services Authority, launching proposals for an impartial committee yesterday Andrew Buistman

that the precise format of the committee had yet to be established.

However, he said that while industry representatives would clearly not be in the majority, "industry validation is very important if the decisions are to carry weight".

Defendants would be able to put their case orally as well as having the chance to see the evidence on which the case against them is based.

At present 95 per cent of cases are settled internally

without need for outside appeal.

Mr Davies said he hoped most cases would continue to be settled by agreement.

"If you found a high proportion of cases were being appealed and overturned then

clearly something was going wrong."

The paper also obliges the FSA to inform people when they are being investigated and bars it from using information obtained under compulsion to be used in criminal prosecutions.

In addition, the FSA says it will prosecute in all cases where there is sufficient evidence to do so and will not seek to impose a civil fine - which requires a lower burden of proof - where it is pursuing a criminal prosecution.

IN BRIEF

London increases share of business

LONDON continues to grow its share of the world's financial business, according to new figures released today. British Invisibles estimates that 70 per cent of international bond trading in the Euromarket now takes place in London, and that over the past three years the UK's share of the world's foreign exchange market has risen from 30 per cent to 34 per cent.

Railtrack bidders

AMEC and GTRM were yesterday named as the preferred bidders for Railtrack maintenance contracts worth £220m. GTRM, a division of Tarmac, has bid for contracts covering the West Midlands, Cumbria and South Wales areas of the rail network while Amec has been appointed the preferred bidder for the West Anglian and North London regions.

Airport landing

BRUSSELS yesterday expressed its concern over the black market in airport landing and take-off slots, warning that airlines were breaking the European Union rules that allow slots to be exchanged but not sold. Ben Van Houtte, the commission official responsible for enforcing EU air transport rules, also admitted that the rules, which are under review, were "particularly obscure".

Salvage plunges

SHARES IN Universal Salvage plummeted 20 per cent to 43p after the company, which sells wrecked cars bought from insurance companies either as scrap or for repair, reported a six-month loss of £900,000 before tax, compared with a £1m profit year ago.

The company blamed the influx of cheaper cars from Europe and said the collapse in demand from Asia, where it exports most of its written-off cars, has pushed scrap metal prices down by 60 per cent.

Standard Life

IN AN article yesterday Standard Bank, the banking arm of the Standard Life insurance company, was inadvertently described as Standard Chartered bank. We apologise for any confusion.

Complex Euro firms 'should follow US model'

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN holding companies with complex shareholder structures will have to come into line with British and American models if they are to attract overseas investment, according to Warburg Dillon Read, the investment bank.

The comments came a day after Warburg paid £100m for 10 per cent stakes in two French companies, the inter-linked Marine-Wendel and CGIP which are trading at huge discounts to their asset values. CGIP owns a 20 per cent stake in Cap Gemini, the IT services group.

Warburg wants to work with CGIP's chairman, Ernest-Antoine Seilliere, to unlock the value in the businesses and believes action by such a high-profile

in Italy, Belgium and Sweden.

Warburg is scheduled to

meet Mr Seilliere in January to

put a set of proposals to him on

how the changes might be imple-

mented. Its action follows a

move on Pathe, the French

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BskyB and CanalSatellite, by

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French utility, and EuraFrance,

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BSkyB suffers as forecasts are cut

BSKYB, the satellite television group, suffered a double whammy as analysts cut their forecasts and Goldman Sachs struggled to place 17 million shares.

As Goldman offered just under 1 per cent of BSkyB's capital to institutional investors, the downgrades made the American investment house's task particularly difficult, and the shares headed the list of Footsie fallers, off 21p to 480.5p. Goldman paid, it is thought, 478p for its shares and tried to sell them at 482p.

When the stock market closed it looked as though the US house had been left with shares on its books, which could indicate further weakness for the Murdoch television operation.

Goldman picked up its stake from BSB Holdings, owned by Granada, Pearson and the French Pathé group, which is under pressure to make its assets sweat. BSB still has 11.8 per cent of Sky.

With Granada – and Carlton Communications – behind the ONDigital challenge to Sky, the sale came as no surprise. Granada sold its direct Sky stake earlier this

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

azine would lose its VAT-free status. Sky's problems are underlined by the demanding profit estimates prevailing before the latest round of downgrades. The consensus profit figure was £223m and some seemed to be looking for something above £300m. Mr Horsman, however, still regards Sky as a long-time investment and remains a buyer of the shares.

In an unrelated deal, Cazenove placed a line of 5 million Pearson shares with institutions at 1,190p; the price rose 31p to 1,162p.

Footsie continued to make headway, with the index up a further 51.2 points to 5,685.2 in busy trading. Technical influences, ahead of today's futures and options expiry could have prompted some of the trading. Supporting shares were much more subdued with the mid cap index up just 6.3 at 4,695.9 and the small cap 2 at 2,012.1.

The latest Gulf tension was largely ignored. Oils were given a boost, with British Petroleum up 12p to 888.5p, although the stock market seems to be coming round to the view that its giant merger with American group Amoco will

not be completed until next year. Shell improved 9.25p to 358.25p and Esso 2p to 103.5p.

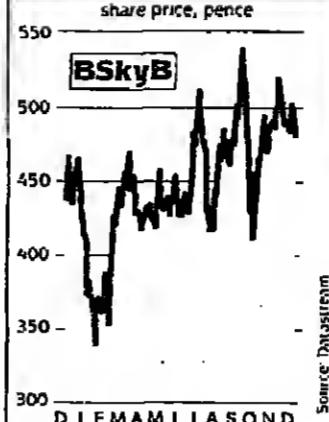
Rolls-Royce suddenly uncoupled a higher altitude as the aero-engine group was touted as a major

SILVERMINES, one of the companies in the Bob Morton stable, rose 4p to 39.5p on stories that it planned to do the splits, breaking itself into two stand-alone operations, telecommunications and security. Aggressive TT, which increased its stake to 5.79 per cent, must be putting pressure on the company, which has a progressive profits record and made £4.8m last year. The shares, 58p earlier this year, have been as high as 92p.

player in the foreshadowed reshaping of the European defence industry.

British Aerospace merging with the German DaimlerChrysler has been the most popular forecast although General Electric Co

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



Stories surfaced that bidder Siebe may want to renegotiate its bid terms because trading at its target continues to deteriorate. Siebe was also 1.5p lower – at 215.5p.

Reuters, the information group,

EURO.NM, the fledgling European share market specialising in hi-tech shares, should attract another four Stock Exchange members next year, which would, in effect, double its size. The existing exchange members are Amsterdam, Brussels, Frankfurt and Paris; they expect to be joined by Copenhagen, Milan, Stockholm and Zurich. Euro.NM currently makes markets in the shares of around 160 companies.

jumped 35.5p to 613p on Morgan Stanley support, but drinks group Allied Domecq, which has held investment meetings, fell 21p to 450.25p as CSFB repeated its sell advice. SG Securities added to the Allied discomfort by suggesting a

switch into Diageo, up 23.5p to 673.5p.

Newcastle United, as unquoted media group NTL picked up 6.3 per cent and held out the prospect of a bid, fell 3.5p to 98.5p.

Asda, where hopes of a strike by the American Wal-Mart group linger, rose 6.5p to 154p after results slightly below best expectations.

Halifax, continuing its buy-back programme with another 115,000 shares at 85p, weakened 13.5p to 861.5p as the prospect of more mortgage competition loomed with the arrival of Standard Life, the insurance group, in the housing market.

Newcomer Bioglan Pharma made a winning debut, closing at 262.5p against a 245p placing. Stanford Rock jumped 15p to 121.5p after signing a licensing deal for some of its developments.

Universal Salvage was top of the flops, off 11.5p to 43p as another profit warning appeared. The shares were 286p two years ago.

SEAG VOLUME: 974.4 million
SEAG TRADES: 57,780
GILT INDEX: n/a

Just the right time to find a future in oil

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS BY JOHN WILLCOCK

LORD FRASER of Carmyllie must be getting well used to crises and controversy by now. He resigned earlier this month as the Tory Party's deputy leader in the House of Lords following William Hague's falling out with his boss, Lord Cranborne.

Now Lord Fraser has joined the International Petroleum Exchange (IPE) as the oil futures market's new chairman – just in time for the bombing of Iraq.

RAILTRACK IS seeking 250 volunteers to spend three to four hours of their time getting on and off a train.

Bemused commuters fighting their way out of Moorgate station in the City rush hour yesterday morning were handed yellow leaflets headlined: "Stand and we'll deliver 1.00 to travel staff to ease those Christmas blues."

The leaflets, from contractor WS Atkins, said that Railtrack is sponsoring a series of tests at a railway station on 9 January, and is offering a lucky prize draw to reward any takers.

The first prize is £1,000, then £750, then £250, plus another ten £50 prizes. The losers get just £10 "travel costs".

A spokeswoman for WS Atkins said they hoped the inducement would be enough to attract the required number of people. So what are the tests all about?

"It's an important part of the tests that the people taking part don't know what it's about," the spokeswoman replied.

THERE HAVE been mutterings from junior staff at the Bank of England about the measly £100 bonus that they are being paid to come in for the three days of the euro conversion weekend over the New Year.

The Bank is making the "commitment payment" in recognition of the fact that staff will have to come in on New Year's Day, post the usual New Year's Eve revels, and help convert all the bank's myriad systems to the new euro currency.

Up to 300 of the Bank's 2,000 staff will have to be there to change currency accounts, update computer systems and answer queries from banks throughout the City on the changes needed.

A spokeswoman for the Bank denies the £100 payments are measly.

Everyone knows I have a twin-track career and I intend to continue it," Sir Archie said. "I have every intention of remaining MP for Tunbridge Wells. I'm not about to go off and be chief executive somewhere else."

So Barclays Bank shareholders can relax, for now.

THE NEW enforcement regime outlined by Howard Davies, chairman of the Financial Services Authority, yesterday, doesn't lack teeth.

As Mr Davies pointed out, Clause 138 of the Financial Services and Markets Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, "has powers for the decapitation of IFAs (independent financial advisers)."

I think he was joking.

Tim Richards is leaving Daiwa Europe to join Westdeutsche Landesbank Girzentele as global head of its debt syndication team. WestLB's head of Eurobond trading, Tony Maude and trader Mark Dodd will join the bank's London syndication team in January, the bank said.

People and Business welcomes tiny contributions. Please send e-mails to indibusiness@independent.co.uk.

spent more than \$300m on bolt-on acquisitions of American building materials producers during the last year and 50 per cent of its profits now come from the US.

Cornerstone, the company's US-based subsidiary, was behind yesterday's bullish statement. Robust demand, driven by the strength of the US economy, enabled Cornerstone to push up prices and boost its margins, the company said.

City analysts are optimistic about the division's near-term future. Over

the next six years, Hanson's US business will be among the key suppliers to a \$216bn roadbuilding programme, recently approved by the US Congress.

However other investors are worried about Hanson's business in the UK, where construction has been hit by the economic downturn. The company said it wanted to reduce its exposure to the UK in 1999 through another aggressive round of bolt-on buys in the US.

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Fund	Setl	Buy	+/-	Yld	Incls	Fund	Setl	Buy	+/-	Yld	Incls	Fund	Setl	Buy	+/-	Yld	Incls	Fund	Setl	Buy	+/-	Yld	Incls	
AIAI American Pensions Fund Ltd						Portfolios Inc	105.00	384.95	1.50	5.00		Portfolios Inc	134.20	142.50	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	20.10	22.50	0.50	2.57	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Growthline Fund	217.02	231.19	0.50	3.47	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Property Income	143.41	151.81	0.25	3.26	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Dividend Fund	120.00	125.00	0.25	3.26	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
High Income	57.14	68.79	0.25	7.41	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Global Bonds/Bonds	67.15	103.35	0.75	0.75	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
AIAI Growth Trust Ltd						Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
4 British Bridges Fund, London, UK	200.00					Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Alpha Fund	61.171	278.797				Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Alpha Fund	100.00	224.00	0.25	3.49	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
American Salt Cos	49.00	64.00	0.25	1.07	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
American Strategic Fund	154.50	150.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Balanced Funds	17.51	17.50	0.25	2.18	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Car & Sust Ed	15.50	9.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Corporate Bonds	57.71	61.00	0.25	0.86	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Corporate Bonds	10.20	19.25	0.25	7.74	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
FTSE 100	94.44	161.00	0.25	2.33	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Global Strategic Fund	41.30	44.26	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Global Strategic Fund	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
International Growth	17.81	19.71	0.25	0.11	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Japan Cos	10.00	11.10	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Latin America	57.65	61.00	0.25	0.25	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Latin America	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
Managed Funds	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
UK Growth	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
UK Real Estate	3.04	3.00	0.25	0.03	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
UK Small Cap	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
UK Small Cap	20.75	21.19	0.25	0.22	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
AIAI Small Cap	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
AIAI Small Cap	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24	77.00	0.50	1.73	0.00	Portfolios Inc	144.00	151.50	0.50	1.70	0.00	Portfolios Inc
AIAI Small Cap	10.00	10.00	0.25	0.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	165.00	150.60	0.50	1.50	5.00	Portfolios Inc	132.24											

SPORT

International football: Campaigners are clocking up air miles and a £9m bill in effort to bring big prize 'back home'

2006: a costly World Cup odyssey

BY NICK HARRIS

WALES, MALLI and Trinidad may not have much in common - but all have reason to appreciate the benevolence of the English Football Association. While the Welsh FA will receive £900,000 in gifts over three years from the FA, the West African country will receive technical support in the run-up to staging the African Nations Cup in 2002 and the Caribbean island's association will continue to reap praise on its English counterpart for all the recent assistance it has been given.

The gifts to the Football Association of Wales have been dogged by controversy - Graham Kelly resigned as the FA's chief executive and the chairman, Keith Wiseman, received a unanimous vote of no confidence over plans to give it with the finance committee - but the help given to the other nations is all part and parcel of the legitimate business of lobbying for the right to stage the 2006 World Cup.

A delegation from the England 2006 campaign team - comprising Kelly, Sir Bobby Charlton, the Sports Minister Tony Banks and the campaign director Alec McGivern - visited Mali last month and presented their bid to Amadou Diakite, Mali's top football official and one of 24 men who will decide where the 2006 tournament will be staged.

"Bobby Charlton is a legend and many people know him," said

You won't win by sitting in your office in Whitehall. It impresses people there is a minister on the team'

Diakite yesterday. "When he came, many people enjoyed his visit." A Mali spokesman added: "After the visit, the FA and the government of England were consulting to see what help they can give to the Mali FA for the ANC in 2002."

Diakite, who said that this help is likely to consist of FA officials advising his country on security matters for 2002, added he would like to see an African country host the World Cup in 2006.

"My decision [won't be taken now]" he added saying that, should his preference not be possible, he would not object to England hosting the tournament.

In Trinidad, there is no hint of wavering in support. "I'll be voting for England and whatever influence I can use within my confederation [Concacaf, the regional body for North America, Central America and the Caribbean], I will do so," Oliver Camps, the president of the FA in Trinidad, said.

Ccacaf will decide how to cast its four votes (of the 24 in total) collectively, added Camps, and said that he would influence Jack Warner, Concacaf's president - who is also from Trinidad - as much as be could to make sure they come England's way in March 2000 when voting takes place.

McGivern, Banks and Sir Bobby all visited Trinidad in October 1997 to talk to Camps, but contact from the English FA did not stop there. Only last week McGivern gave a football workshop in Trinidad with three English coaches and, earlier this year, they paid for the referee Uriah Seani to attend a similar event on the island.

"We are very grateful for that," Camps said. "They [the English

FA] have been very supportive. Whenever we ask for assistance they come forward." He said they had never offered financial assistance, but added: "We have not asked for that. It may come soon. We always need grants."

While the FA and the 2006 campaign team have been making friends around the world with their good work, not everyone has been impressed. Banks, in particular, has come in for criticism, and his globetrotting was due to be the subject of a question in Parliament on Wednesday. The Conservative MP Richard Spring had tabled the question - asking why the Sports Minister had been spending so much time abroad when other sports governing bodies felt neglected - but the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, perhaps because of events at the FA this week, did not elaborate on Banks' travels.

"If there is to be a bid from this part of the world, we should carry on fighting for it," the Prime Minister said. Banks himself has defended his role in the 2006 team. "This is supposed to be an all-party effort and I think some people are trying to sabotage the bid," he said. "As far as I am concerned we are still the favourites and I would have hoped that the opposition would have supported our campaign rather than those of our competitors."

A spokesman for the Sports Minister said his actions were not only understandable, but necessary. "You won't win a World Cup

for this country by sitting in your office in Whitehall," he said. "It impresses these countries that there is a government minister on the bid team."

Since October 1997 Banks has been on 2006 bid business to the United States, Costa Rica, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Belgium, Qatar, Spain and Cameroon, as well as Mali and Trinidad. A variety of other campaign luminaries and FA officials - including Sir Bobby, Kelly, Wiseman, McGivern, Sir Geoff Hurst and Gary Lineker - have travelled around the globe to drum up support.

"It's very important to meet people face to face," a spokesman for 2006 campaign said, adding it was also very important that Banks was playing an integral part in campaigning. "We're very happy that he is giving a lot of active support," the spokesman said. "Obviously the government is very supportive."

The budget for the campaign - which will last until voting takes place a year in March - is £9m, said the spokesman. He explained that £3m was contributed by the FA, £3m by Premier League clubs and £3m by the Sports Council. It not only paid for all the travel expenses and entertaining, but for the huge array of other promotional work that has gone and will continue to go into persuading the 24 all-important men to opt for England.

He added that the high profile nature of the campaign team was necessary to give the bid gravitas, hence the Prime Minister's involvement in hosting several meetings with leading footballing statesmen in Down-



Spreading the message: The England 2006 campaigners (left to right), Tony Banks, Sir Bobby Charlton and Graham Kelly watch the president of Argentina, Carlos Menem, demonstrate his own skills on the ball in Buenos Aires earlier this year. Ricardo Abad

Kelly's exit makes no difference, says Sir Bobby

SIR BOBBY CHARLTON yesterday said that the resignation of the Football Association chief executive, Graham Kelly, had not affected world governing body Fifa's attitude towards England's 2006 World Cup bid.

"FA executive committee members say this will not really affect England's chances of staging the World Cup," Charlton insisted in Bangkok, where he is promoting the bid at the Asian Games.

"It's just a small hiccup in our campaign for the World Cup," said the England 1998 World Cup winner. "It will not affect the work we do. The bid is England's not the English FA's."

Alec McGivern, the man leading the England bid, described Kelly's resignation as a little "local difficulty" that should not derail the national campaign to bring soccer back home.

McGivern, in Bangkok with

Charlton, said his team remained focused on winning the sport's big prize. "I don't think the current local difficulty will be of much importance to Fifa when it makes its decision in March 2000, which is still 15 months away," he said. "I don't think Fifa care who is chairman or CEO [Chief Executive Officer] of an association."

England's campaigners are battling against rivals from South Africa, Germany and four other

countries for the right to host the World Cup finals. But the resignation of Kelly was considered a blow for the campaign - even though the Prime Minister Tony Blair and other bid supporters denied it would have any effect.

Kelly resigned after a meeting of the FA's executive committee investigated a £1.2 million loan made to the Football Association of Wales.

The loan was alleged to have been

made on the understanding that Wales would back an attempt to put an Englishman, the FA chairman Keith Wiseman, on the powerful executive committee of world soccer's governing body.

McGivern, a former political campaign manager, said England should be represented on the Fifa committee but the bid team was happy to work with the committee whoever sat on it. "Certainly the English FA should have a powerful

voice," he said. "We're the original footballing country. You only have to travel with Bobby Charlton to see that the interest is enormous. Our club football is followed all over the globe."

"With the greatest respect to Graham Kelly and Keith Wiseman, they know that this bid is much bigger than two individuals," McGivern added. "It's a nationwide attempt to bring the greatest sporting tournament in the world to England."

McLaren's effort misfires as Ferrari produce a winner

IT WAS a Formula One season dominated by McLaren and Ferrari, and appropriately they are competing in the Christmas books market. The British team may have had the edge on tarmac, but on paper they lose out to the Italians.

Collins Willow could scarcely have chosen a better year to publish *Teamwork* by Gerald Donaldson (£24.99), the authorised biography of McLaren. What might have been an enthralling insight into a tense and occasionally controversial challenge for the world champ-

BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS

Today: Motor racing

tered with imaginative selection of photographs.

Of course it is easier when the subject has the red livery and charisma of Ferrari. However, this is a well-worn publishing route and many efforts down the years have failed more miserably than the team. *Ferrari 1947-1997*, The Official Book, edited by Gianni Cancellieri (Haynes Publishing £50) bucks the trend. At that price, you might argue, it ought to, but since this is a celebration of the Marque's golden jubilee something special was

called for. It demanded style, Ferrari style, and that is precisely what it has delivered.

The book traces the origins and creation of the legend, and examines the team's triumphs and turbulent times, decade by decade. The cars, the engines, the drivers, the glories and the catastrophes are captured in word and superb illustration.

Many of the surviving drivers pen personal memoirs, tributes to Enzo Ferrari, the team and the legend. Biographies of those no longer with us

provide a poignant reminder of more perilous racing eras.

If you are a Ferrari freak - or even just a motor racing freak - you cannot but be entranced by this book.

The decade-by-decade format is followed also in *Formula One - Fifty Golden Years*, edited by David Tremayne (Apex Marketing, £14.95) which presents an excellent overview of the history of the grand prix world championship.

All the leading personalities and the outstanding races are featured in this easy on the

eye, flick through the years, value for money offering.

This past year has not been particularly successful or satisfying for one of Formula One's grandees, Jackie Stewart. His Stewart Ford team struggled to make an impact in their second championship season and were hounded to the last by speculation of a takeover.

An extension of his contract with Ford gave the former world champion some badly needed comfort. So might the unashamedly nostalgic Jackie

Stewart: Triple crowned king of speed, by Karl Ludvigsen (Haynes, £24.99).

There is frankly nothing new here, despite the tenuous claims this is the first biography that assesses Stewart's pioneering work for safer motor racing from the vantage point of the late 90s.

No matter, Stewart's is a compelling tale that merits the retelling and younger race fans may welcome the opportunity to be acquainted with his phenomenal achievements and contribution to the sport.

The crusading zeal generated in the aftermath of Ayrton Senna's death in 1994, found overwhelming global support. Attitudes in the 60s and 70s were very different.

Stewart was dismissed in some quarters as a meddlesome wimp for daring to seek means of saving drivers' lives, but he was undeterred by the traditionalists. He had lost too many friends to be deflected from his course and his legacy is testimony to another kind of courage.

DERRICK ALLSOP

Unsinkable starts Gold Cup voyage

MARTIN PIPE has never won a Cheltenham Gold Cup but he was involved in perhaps the most controversial Blue Riband of the modern era.

That came in 1992, when the little man was represented by an enormous horse in the shape of the intimidating Carville's Hill. He went off an even-money shot and came back a cripple after the "stalking horse" Gold Cup, when the big horse was shadowed over the early fences by Jenny Pitman's Golden Freeze. Carville's Hill was fifth, last and effectively damaged beyond repair.

It could be that Pipe will have a chance to erase this disturbing memory from his record in extraordinarily apt circumstances at the foot of Prestbury Hill next March. Not only does he harbour great aspiration for another immense horse in his Nicklasheyard yard but the beast in question also runs in the Carville's Hill colours of Paul Green.

Unsinkable Boxer ran just five times for Pipe last season following his transfer to the West Country, but, on each occasion, he won with a facility which suggested he'd only had to lift one lung with oxygen.

The run culminated at Liverpool, which followed an outrageous capture of the Gold

By RICHARD EDMONDSON

Card Hurdle Final at the Cheltenham Festival. Unsinkable Boxer started a 5-2 favourite that day, which is plenty short enough for a 24-runner handicap, even when it is not staged in the competitive amphitheatre of the Festival. Nevertheless, he was a steaming hot for Tony McCoy.

All these successes were over hurdles. However, when Pipe implied that Unsinkable Boxer's future lay over fences the bookmakers were not about

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Nap: Barbale Boy (Lingfield 2-10)

NB: Lord Richfield (Uttorster 2-00)

to start flashing fancy prices around about the Gold Cup. They made the gelding a 14-1 shot, which might seem a silly price if Unsinkable Boxer wins his novice chase at Uttoxeter this afternoon.

Silly it no doubt is already, but if the fencing tyro avoids mishap today, the new odds will be asony proportions. Of the 23 declared for the Uttoxeter race, only three have the temerity to stay in and challenge Unsinkable Boxer. He should destroy the opposition

and the layers will then do the same to his odds.

"The horse has schooled very well at home but there are only four runners in the race, so I don't know how much we're going to learn from it," Chester Barnes, Pipe's assistant trainer, said yesterday. "He looks like a chaser. He's a massive big thing and he's wide with it."

"Ideally, we just want to school him round and win easily, but there are a few tricky fences at Uttoxeter. He's normally a hold-up job, but we're not really going to be able to do that."

Brendan Powell tells us he schooled him four years ago and jumped very well and Tony [McCoy] is looking forward to riding him, but it's a completely different ball game on the track. He's a ridiculous price for the Gold Cup, but if he just gets round and wins tomorrow, the bookies will probably cut him to single-figure odds."

The Lefley's Hog Roast Novices' Chase is not the most romantic of titles on which to be launching a prospective champion but then the Pipe team is running out of time. Unsinkable Boxer was due to run at Newton Abbot's abandoned Monday card and the yard acknowledge that he is in need of a fencing crammer. "He's not got a lot of miles on the clock but he's a

nine-year-old now, so he's got to get a move on," Barnes added. "We'd like to get a few runs before the Festival because he needs the experience. He needs to be jumping quickly as you have to when you're with those good horses at Cheltenham."

Barnes has contemplated defeat and seems to have found a comfortable refuge. "If he doesn't win, so be it," he said.

"We're talking sport here and we'll still be living and breathing at the end of the day. God willing, if we win, lose or draw, it's not like we're living in Baghdad or anything."

Paul Nicholls resides rather closer than that to Pipe, his West country neighbour, and he, too, is plotting serious victories in the New Year. The Ditchie

trainer has three entries in the Victor Chandler Chase at Ascot next month and it appears that they may all be nuzzling the starting tape. "Lake Kariba is in the Castleford Chase at Wetherby over Christmas and we'll have to see how he comes out of that first," Nicholls said yesterday. "Squire Silk runs on Saturday and the same applies, while Call Equine has not run for over a year now but he may make his seasonal debut in the Victor Chandler"

Last gasp: Hawthorne Glen takes the final flight at Towcester yesterday before finishing unplaced in the Turkey Selling Hurdle David Ashdown

Cheers for the Diddy men

GLASSES WERE raised to Diddy Rymer in a Chesterfield pub last night after the mare landed the Plum Pudding Claiming Hurdle at Towcester

Diddy Rymer, trained by Sue Smith, was scoring for 15 regulars of the Royal Oak at Brampton, a partnership headed by the licensee, Richard Younger. The celebrations were tinged with regret, however,

as Diddy Rymer was claimed for £6,000 for other owners and will now be trained in Wilts-

shire by Simon Earle instead of in Yorkshire.

It was the bookmakers' turn for some Christmas cheer when Sierra Bay had every

thing go his way to help him to victory at Towcester. Oliver Sherwood's eight-year-old had failed to complete in five of his six previous outings and was the 12-2 outsider of four.

But Sierra Bay eased home eight lengths clear of the favourite, Buckland Lad. Sherwood's wife, Tanya, insisted:

"He's not a monkey, he's just a bit quirky. Some days at home he'll take off with his lad, other days he'll be as quiet as a lamb. But he has always worked like a demon."

"Today everything was perfect for him. At Uttoxeter, his last run, he made a monumental blunder and he bulked after it." Oliver Sherwood was absent from the track and his wife added: "This is the first time I've done a winner with him not here."

Sierra Bay eased home

eight lengths clear of the favourite, Buckland Lad. Sherwood's wife, Tanya, insisted:

FORM GUIDE

Galdent Mose: British debut having done well over fences in France, runs up in a good field on home soil and is a 15-length favourite.

Sound Appeal: Has failed to make an impact this season and is only 10-10 lower than when 3, beaten 26 lengths, at Newbury on good to soft late.

Nakir: Keenly fancied at Newbury, 36 lengths out but won over fences at Wetherby.

Saint Clet: Game wags on soft surface at Haydock (2nd and 3rd) in November. Re-

portedly purpled latest run, when may well have been too much in weight anyway.

Semared: Acts on soft ground in very good form, winning by 7 lengths here at New-

market and in three more competitive events since, ½ length best at Lord

Pembroke at Newbury last time, and meets that rival again in the same terms today.

Larkspur: Keenly fancied at Uttoxeter, 10 lengths out but won over fences at Newbury.

Galaxy: Last start in a bumper at Uttoxeter, 10 lengths out but won over fences at

Wetherby.

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Galaxy: Last start in a

Broncos revival starts at Sunbury

London's under-achieving rugby league side are hoping that two Australian coaches can revive their fortunes. By Dave Hadfield

TO THOSE OF US who have only just got used to the idea of rugby league as a summer game it comes as a shock to the system that, before winter has really started, clubs should be preparing for next year.

Few have started their pre-season training earlier than the London Broncos, with under-achievement last season to get out of their system. If they succeed in doing so it will be a tribute to a remarkable collaboration between two young coaches who both wanted the job.

Out on a sports club pitch in Sunbury, occasionally used by London Irish's junior sides, Dan Stains and Les Kiss are already putting next year's Broncos through their paces.

Two Australians in their mid-30s, they were natural rivals for the role of head coach at London when Tony Currie ran out of time after last season's disappointments.

"Les was initially the frontrunner for the job," says Stains. "He approached me about being his assistant. But, after a few days of discussing our philosophies, I told him 'Look, I want the job.' In effect, I wanted his job, but he said he could understand that."

Stains, a famously tough and hard-working forward with Cronulla, Queensland and, briefly, Halifax, made his pitch to the Broncos and impressed them enormously with what he often refers to as his vision for the club.

"But the way Les responded showed me that he was the man I wanted to work with."

So both candidates are working side by side in Sunbury. "Dan's the head coach and I'm totally happy with that," says the former Kangaroo winger, who retired early with a persistent knee injury and worked his way through the coaching structure at North Sydney.

The theory is that the division of responsibilities between the two will play to Kiss's strengths.

"Dan will prepare the first-team squad, with me assisting while I have a role with the other sides and a broader-based responsibility for grassroots rugby league in London."

It's understandable that most of our players now come from outside the area, but our image of the future is all about bringing through players from London."

That ambition is given practical expression by the way that the Broncos' most promising young southern-based players are already training with the imported professionals from Australia, New Zealand and the north of England.

Stains points to a young winger: "That's Wayne Sykes; he's lightning-quick and a first-grader in the making. He'll get



Peter Gill, the London Broncos captain, gets down to work in the gym in pre-season training yesterday

Peter Jay

an opportunity to show what he can do this year."

There are others, like Ed Jennings, a stand-off or loose forward originally from the Isle of Wight, and James Brooks, a scrum-half from Henley-on-Thames shadowing Shaun Edwards in training, who are also tipped to make the breakthrough this coming season.

Initially, however, much will depend on how well Stains and Kiss can mould together the mix of antipodeans and northern expatriates who will make up their first-choice team.

Edwards, never one to suffer with coaches he does not rate, is training with his full ferocity, although the Broncos would be happier if Martin Offiah's lingering foot injury would allow him to get out onto the training paddock more often.

Perhaps the most important test, though, will be how well Karle Hammond, a significant northern signing in his prime, settles in.

The Broncos see a symbolic as well as practical value in Hammond adapting well, on and off the field. The unwillingness of leading players from

the rugby league heartlands to relocate to the big, bad city, has been one of the limiting factors throughout London's history.

The early Fulham teams got around that by hussing in whole sides; now, a signing like Hammond has to move his family to London. He has a house in Isleworth, he is the process of selling his home in Widnes and has trained hard enough to bring his weight down by half a stone in order to revert to his favourite position of stand-off next year.

And, as usual, there are the new Australian faces to get to know. This time last year the Broncos didn't even know who they were recruiting - something that contributed to their slow start; this time only the newly-signed Robbie Simpson, a second-rower from St George, is not in the country yet.

"They have come together more quickly than any group of players we have had," says the club's football manager, Trevor Howard, who has been organising the comings and goings for the last five years.

Stains and Kiss have put heavy emphasis on involving wives and girlfriends. "We have

to have that sense of all being in this together," says Kiss. "We are still a pioneering club."

This year's new pioneers include players who should make an immediate impact, like the front-rowers, Darren Bradstreet and Dean Calloway from Illawarra and Greg Fleming, a versatile hook who was a regular first-grader at Canterbury last season.

But it would please Stains and Kiss no end if the players we are talking about in a few months' time are among the young hopefuls working out with them this winter.

Fit-again Wright is back in business

NIGEL WRIGHT is to resurrect what once looked the most promising of careers with Huddersfield next season, writes Dave Hadfield

The former England and Great Britain Under-21 stand-off was written off by Wigan earlier this year, because of a series of leg and ankle injuries. But now Super League's bottom club last season is giving him the chance to start again, following a final settlement with Wigan.

"I've had an independent medical which proved there is nothing wrong with me," said Wright, 25, as he signed yesterday. "It's been a long year for me and I'm glad it's behind me."

Wright was regarded as one of the brightest young talents in the game when Wigan paid Wakefield £140,000 for him in 1993. But he was rarely free of injury at Central Park and was given an ultimatum last winter to prove his fitness.

If his confidence now is justified, he could form an exciting half-back partnership at Huddersfield with Bobbie Goulding.

"Nigel will be a key player at this club and I'm delighted to have got him," said the Huddersfield and former Great Britain coach, Malcolm Reilly, a long-time admirer of Wright.

Bradford have continued their pruning for next season by releasing two more players, Sonny Nickle, the former Great Britain second-rower, and the winger, Andy Hodgson.

Both are interesting newly-promoted Wakefield Trinity, who have already taken another Bradford player, Kevin Crouchers, on loan for next season.

New club Gateshead Thunder have made another Australian signing, the Brisbane Broncos' reserve second-rower, Brett Green. The prop forward, Andy Ireland, has agreed a new, two-year contract at Hull.

Chris Morley, the forward sacked by Warrington last season, has won his case claiming unfair dismissal. Warrington are expected to come to terms over a severance deal, leaving him free to look for another club.

The former Leeds United chairman, Bill Fotherby, has become the new managing director at Hunslet.

Palmer still off form after injury absence

SWIMMING

By Ian Gordon

PAUL PALMER's hopes of a championship winning return were dashed in Glasgow last night.

Palmer, the Olympic silver medallist who has not competed since last July because of muscle fatigue syndrome, had to settle for fourth place at the British Short Course Championships. The 24-year-old, who only returned to training in October and held no great expectations of success, was never in the victory hunt against tough opposition.

But it would please Stains and Kiss no end if the players we are talking about in a few months' time are among the young hopefuls working out with them this winter.

Palmer's best chance is likely to come in the 400m, the discipline in which he won silver in Atlanta in 1996 and bronze in last January's World Championships in Australia.

Alison Sheppard smashed her Scottish 100m freestyle record for the second time yesterday as she qualified for today's final.

Sheppard took a massive 1.09sec off the record of 56.03 she set in the morning heats with victory in her semi-final in only 54.94.

An extra semi-final round has been reintroduced for the 50m and 100m events to give swimmers the chance to experience what they will face in Hong Kong.

Sheppard, who claimed the British 50m freestyle record last weekend only to see Sue Rolph break it the next day, had lowered her six-year-old Scottish mark by just over a tenth of a second in the morning.

Spence keeps his cool

GOLF

CRAIG SPENCE shot the best round of his career to open up a three-stroke lead after the first day of the Coolum Classic yesterday. The Australian came in just before nightfall with a seven-under-par 65 at the Hyatt Regency resort course.

Spence left fellow Australians Adam Crawford and Paul Moloney three shots back in joint second place on the Sunshine Coast course. His painfully slow round did not contain a

bogey, a tribute to the 24-year-old's patience as some rounds reached the six-hour mark and one group failed to finish.

His late charge denied joint leadership. Crawford, who squeezed two late birdies from a tough Coolum layout, and Moloney, who returned 68s.

In extremely hot conditions, Crawford rolled home birdies at the 17th and 18th holes.

TOMORROW

DAVID O'LEARY
ON LIFE AT
LEEDS AFTER
GEORGE
GRAHAM

THE INDEPENDENT

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FORM VERDICT

A similar race to the first division of the claimer in that there are no negatives against almost all of the participants. However, SUAL-MINTON is best in official figures and will win if reproducing his Wolverhampton form here.

1.50 CINCH CONNECTORS GOLIVE '98 MAIDEN STAKES (D) £4,000 2YO 7f

ANOTHER ARTHUR (M) McMahon 9 6... N Gillard 7 9

BRIDGE ROAD (T) D Brown 9 0... J. Kennedy Hart 5 14

BUSSA SAHIB (M) G Ross 9 6... P Nation 5 15

DODGEY WATER (D) D Polli 5 18... D Allen 7 11

EDDY TANCER CHANCE (D) J Heffernan 9 0... D Aller 7 11

ELLA'S NIGHTMARE (D) M Smith 9 6... D Murray 6 15

ERICKSON (D) A Smith 9 5... D Murray 6 15

GRASSY WATER (D) D Polli 5 18... D Murray 6 15

HATPIN LADY (M) C Alton 9 6... N Gillard 7 9

HATPIN LADY (M) D Brown 9 0... J. Kennedy Hart 5 14

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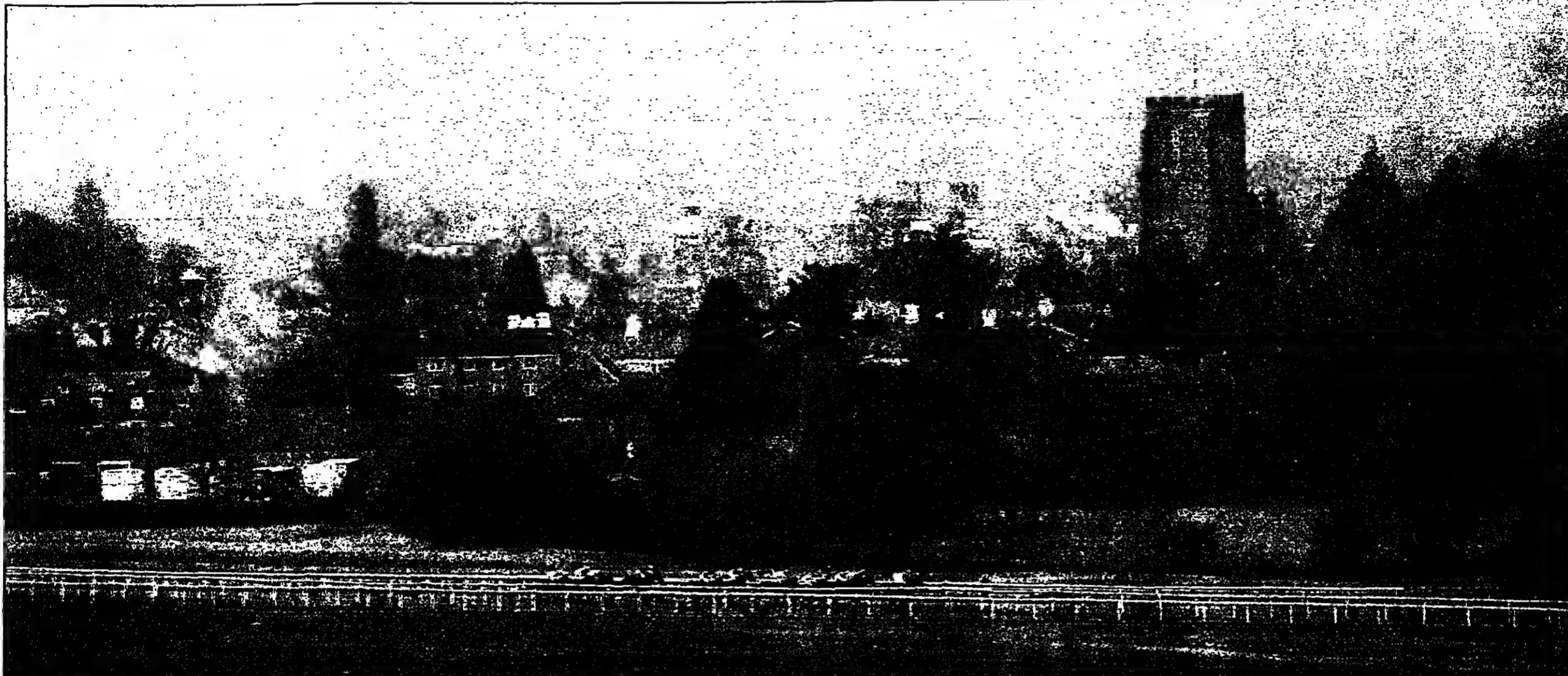
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HATPIN LADY (M) D Brown 9 0... J. Kennedy Hart 5 14



SPORT

MCKIERNAN'S LONG-RUNNING QUEST P29 • HEGG STAKES A CLAIM P28



Steeple chasers: The runners in the two-mile Santa Claus Novice Hurdle prepare to make the uphill turn for home at Towcester yesterday

Racing: pages 26-27; Photograph: David Ashdown

English clubs offered £30m bait

RUGBY UNION
By CHRIS HEWITT
in Dublin

Assuming five places for Premiership sides, the new ballpark figure works out at around £2m per entrant: enough to ease the cash-flow problems currently being felt by even the wealthiest members of the Premiership elite.

Pugh was speaking in Dublin as five of his most influential IB colleagues – Tim Gresson of New Zealand, Rian Oberholzer of South Africa, Syd Millar of Ireland, Shiggy Kono of Japan and Alan Sharp of Canada – set about grilling the Rugby Football Union at a specially convened disciplinary meeting.

Francis Baron, the RFU's new chief executive, was an-

swering charges that the union had broken ranks with the world governing body over responses to the English clubs' attempt to secure commercial rights under European law and that it had failed to discipline those clubs over their programme of unsanctioned fixtures against the two Welsh clubs, Cardiff and Swansea.

In keeping with the previous two years of interminable political wrangling, yesterday's meeting lasted nine hours and broke up without the slightest hint of a conclusion. While the two sides were due to reconvene this morning, the IB did not intend to advise the RFU of its verdict – or, indeed, any accompanying punishment – until next week.

However, Pugh livened things up by throwing one or two unusually sharp barbs into

his otherwise diplomatic of-fensive on the European Cup issue. "The English could have pulled in around £4m this season and I must say I still find it strange that they should have decided to throw away that sort of money because they don't like the look of someone's face," he said. "They want Roger Pickering off the board and they want Tom Kiernan off the board. It's pathetic."

Pickering, the European Cup tournament director, and Kiernan, the revered Irish full-back of the 1960s and early 70s who chairs the ERC board, lost the confidence of the English contingent last season: indeed, English First Division Rugby, the umbrella organisation representing the leading Premiership sides, still insists there will be no return to con-

tentional competition until ERC heads roll and the organising body undergoes a root and branch reorganisation.

"Let's get away from the personalities and start addressing the issues," said Pugh, fully aware of his own status as the arch-boyciem of the English renegades. "I know of nothing more frustrating in this whole sport than the situation surrounding this competition. There is fantastic potential here and it's wasted."

"We've gone out of our way to give the English clubs what they want; for instance, we've changed the voting structure, even though there is not the slightest evidence of a so-called 'celtic block' acting against them. And still we have this stand-off. It's a desperate situation."

The Premiership clubs announced their boycott of the current tournament almost a year ago, ironically a mere three weeks before Bath became the first English side to win the European title by beating Brive, the reigning champions in Bordeaux. Since then, the ERC directors have successfully prevented a walk-out by Stade Français, Toulouse and the other major French powers, but los! Heineken, their long-suffering and overwhelmingly patient prime sponsors, who pumped £10m into the tournament during the three years of their involvement.

A French delegation, led by the legendary Serge Blanco, travelled to London on Tuesday to discuss the European situation with members of the

EFDR executive. Both sides described the meeting as "positive", but one EFDR insider said afterwards: "If anyone thinks we are coming back in with ERC still in place, they are seriously mistaken. We've said we can't work with ERC and we mean it."

That hardline stance may however be diluted if Pugh and his colleagues succeed in delivering the sort of money they were talking about yesterday.

There is no guarantee that the much-debated British League will become a reality next season – or any other season, for that matter – and the English clubs know that they need to generate income over and above that provided by their Premiership sponsors if they are to stay afloat indefinitely.

Pugh admitted that discussions over next season's domestic and European fixture schedule, severely complicated by World Cup commitments and the move to a Six Nations' international format, were not even close to a conclusion, raising the spectre of another frantic summer of political wheeling and dealing.

The British League negotiations had so far been stymied by the lack of a formal contribution from the English clubs, he said; the only thing ruled out of court was any move towards a "self-perpetuating closed shop along the lines of the proposed football super league". Clearly though, Pugh firmly believed that some English club owners were in favour of a cosy little arrangement along precisely those lines.



Millichip: 'Astonished'

Millichip calls for 'massive' change at FA

SIR BERT Millichip has declared that the Football Association needs a "massive overhaul" in the wake of the crisis gripping the game's governing body.

The resignation of the FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, has left a long-term power void which is set to grow next month when the FA chairman, Keith Wiseman, is expected to be forced out of office.

Wiseman's predecessor at the FA, Millichip feels the time is now ripe for the FA to recover from the week's traumatic events by implementing the long-overdue changes he failed to introduce during his own years in charge.

"The structure of the FA

needs a massive overhaul. I tried to do that four times during my time in charge but failed," he said. "There is no doubt that the set-up is Victorian. But what has happened should at least speed things up. What has happened may make the full council look further than the ends of their noses and realise that an overhaul is needed – not just a cosmetic papering over of the cracks."

Millichip believes that the root of the problem at the FA is the unwieldy and all-powerful full council, and "the fact that

you can't make any decisions without the backing of 75 per cent of the 90-odd members". He stops short of advocating the abolition of the full council or even sacking many of its members, given that the grass-roots of the game needs to be represented at the FA in some form and that there is much experience there to be called upon.

Millichip has followed the growing crisis from its inception this summer, when David Will Scotland's representative on the executive of Fifa, football's world governing body, first raised concerns about the way in which Wiseman seemed to be seeking support to replace him.

Millichip admitted: "What

has really astonished me is that it has taken so long to come out. The chairman was making a decision which may have been in the best interests of the FA but, when you make a decision, it is always necessary to gain approval for it. It is not the decision that is in question but the circumstances surrounding it."

The president of the Football Association of Wales has definitely refused to accept any responsibility for the cash-for-votes scandal at Lancaster Gate.

John Hughes insists the FA has done "nothing wrong whatsoever", and says nobody on the council will resign. Hughes also expressed his surprise over comments made by

Helmer says no so Houllier goes for Song

GERARD HOULLIER was preparing to sign Rigobert Song yesterday after a day of chaos and confusion in the transfer market for Liverpool.

The Cameroon international centre-half is poised to move to Anfield in a £1.5m deal from the Italian club Salernitana after Houllier's first choice, Thomas Helmer, turned down a move from Bayern Munich.

The German veteran, who was available on a free transfer stalled on a six-month contract offer, feeling there was no point in leaving Bayern for such a short-term arrangement – he wanted at least 18 months on Merseyside.

Houllier then turned to Song, who had played at left-back in a trial game on Merseyside on Wednesday. The French coach knows the player from his time at Metz and will try to agree a price today.

Song will need a work permit, which may not arrive until the end of January. That would mean the maximum of three work-permit players on the staff, ending the prospect of Olexander Hovorka signing. The Dynamo Kiev player also appeared on trial, against Tranmere on Wednesday, but did not impress Houllier as much as Song.

One player who Houllier is unlikely to be signing has none the less found fame of a sort. The Corinthian midfielder Vampeta is breaking new ground as a model for a gay magazine.

The Brazilian international will be the cover model on the January issue of *G Magazine*, according to a São Paulo newspaper, which printed photos of Vampeta – fully clothed – and excerpts of the interview.

Vampeta said he was not a homosexual but had no prejudices against homosexuals. Some players known to be gay are accepted by team-mates, he said, although there were no gays playing for Corinthians.

Wanderley Luxemburgo, the Corinthians coach, who also looks after the national side, said he had nothing against the modelling session as long as it did not hurt the team.

"I wouldn't buy the magazine because I think Vampeta is very ugly," said Luxemburgo, whom the magazine is also trying to persuade to get his kit off for their readers.

Brazil is more relaxed about homosexuality than other Latin American countries. While some referees are openly gay, no leading player has come out of the closet.

Back home, Scotland's leading sides are set to increase in

the number of league games they play, rather than the reduction sought by Uefa.

The Scottish Premier League said yesterday that it is committed to changing from its 10-club set-up to 12 by 2000, and Roger Mitchell, the League's chief executive, said: "It has not been confirmed yet what the final figure is but we have very little room for manoeuvre."

Scotland's leading sides currently play 36 league games per season while Uefa is advising that 34 is the limit and would like to scale that down to 32 fit in the expanded Champions League and Uefa Cup competitions.

THE FRIDAY CROSSWORD
No.3797 Friday 18 December By Spurios Thursday's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8				9	10	
11		12				
13		14		15		
16						
17	18		19	20		
21						
22			23			
24						
25		26				
27			28			

ACROSS

- Gets out, but walks stiffly (6)
- Score for which rabbit went, yanked (middle) (6)
- "Lie"? "Lay", after one's corrected (5,4)
- Pictorial evidence suggesting stolen Post Office's circulating (5)
- Cricket ground in Kangaroo Valley? (4)
- Mother's article cherished by Granny Smith brings a lump to the throat (5,5)
- Sailors catching infection when engaged in hard work in distant climes (3,5)
- Intimidating people investing ultimately in
- mineral aggregates (5)
- Take back quantity of laundry as nurse returns (5)
- Norfolk river forming part of large, mostly uncharted waters? (4,7)
- Look into offer initially available at the butcher's? (10)
- Capital's very big, see (4)
- About to be belted by Father, in fear (5)
- Bloomer, one Douglas' left to repair (9)
- Feeling of compunction after backbiting German's return (6)
- Successful ball often held in Galway or Kerry (6)
- Row that is suppressed by treasurer (4)

DOWN

- No tangible source for piping tune? (4,3)
- Western county's maidens (5)
- Turn up newspaper item about old soldier (7)
- Committed offence, landing in court (4-7)
- Darkens door, shaves bit of wood off (11)
- Chief's interrupted by Scottish town preacher (3,6)
- Usual gold coin held up by Yemeni leader (8)
- Genuine, as note, when pieced together? (7)
- Decide to have another go at puzzle? (7)
- Second traffic controller to deliver insult (6)
- Row that is suppressed by treasurer (4)

FRIDAY REVIEW

COMMENT • FEATURES • ARTS • LISTINGS • TELEVISION

The Spook The Leak The Editor & His Rival



BY PAUL LASHMAR & ANNE MC ELVOY

The story began with the former MI6 officer Richard Tomlinson, holed up in a hotel in Geneva, chatting in early October to a British journalist about his time with the Secret Intelligence Service. Their lengthy conversation started a chain of events that culminated this week with the remarkable suggestion that the editor of a venerable Sunday newspaper, son of a former chancellor of the Exchequer, was an agent working for – and in the pay of – MI6.

The allegation was made in the House of Commons, under the cloak of parliamentary privilege, by two left-wing Labour MPs. There have been suspicions voiced that Brian Sedgemore and George Galloway may have been aided and abetted by The

Guardian, for the reason that it was keen to get the name of Dominic Lawson into the public arena without having to run the risk of a possible legal action.

Everyone denies everything. The Guardian denies that it set up the 41-year-old editor of The Sunday Telegraph, as do both the MPs. Lawson and the Foreign Office deny that he was an MI6 "agent". Cynics are retorting, "Well, they would, wouldn't they?" and the mud will stick.

Tomlinson is an amenable character who will talk to any journalist who visits Geneva or calls him on the telephone. Last year he was jailed for 12 months, under the Official Secrets Act, after attempting to publish his MI6 memoirs. British government law officers have pursued Mr Tomlinson across the world. After being hounded out of France and New Zealand he took refuge in Geneva. The Swiss are less susceptible to pressure from Britain for extradition.

Two months ago, Tomlinson was visited at his hotel by Mark Watts, the chief news reporter of Sunday Business. The results of their conversation appeared in an article on 11 October 1998 which opened with the line, "The name is Bond, James Bond – licensed to make a killing for UK plc". The article alleged that a national newspaper editor had been recruited as a paid agent. Tomlinson had told him: "This was the most outstanding success of I-OPS or 'Information Operations', an MI6 unit that cultivates friendly journalists and editors." The article did not name the editor.

The story raised eyebrows at MI6. First, the article breached a long-standing court injunction that British newspapers are not to publish any comments by Tomlinson detailing MI6 operations. Secondly, the new information appeared to contain new breaches of the Official Secrets Act. The Ministry of Defence Police were assigned to investigate. Last week, they visited Sunday Business and interviewed the editor, Jeff Randall. They seemed very interested in the story about the editor.

Last Saturday, Michael Evans of The Times wrote a story revealing the MoD police inquiry. Since then, speculation over the editor's identity has been rife in the media. He could have provided journalistic cover for MI6 officers and placed stories for MI6 in his publication. The Sunday Times followed with a lighter piece, quoting various editors who denied it was them. Mr Lawson said he would speak only to the paper's editor.

Jeff Randall, the editor of Sunday Business, said last night: "In the course of the interview, he mentioned that MI6 had recruited a British newspaper editor. That set the hares running."

Randall decided not to pursue the story. "It was possible that Tomlinson's allegations were untrue. And even if they were true, the person concerned – and MI6 – would deny it."

THE NAME of Dominic Lawson, editor of The Sunday Telegraph, was beginning to reverberate around journalistic circles last weekend. It was rumoured that Tomlinson had named him, and that he had been recruited while he was editor of the weekly maga-

zine, The Spectator. Lawson has an impeccable Establishment pedigree. Son of the former Tory chancellor, he was educated at Eton and Westminster; where he was a keen games player. He went on to Christ Church, Oxford, and then worked for The World Tonight and the Financial Times. In 1987 he went to The Spectator (where his father, Nigel Lawson, had been editor in 1965) as Charles Moore's deputy, and became editor himself in 1990.

Conrad Black made him editor of The Sunday Telegraph in 1995, after the Cold War had ended. But the patterns of ideological strife remain locked in the years of permafrost. Conservative publications still point fingers at left-wing journalists for being too close to the foreign intelligence services.

In December 1994, under Lawson's editorship, The Spectator alleged that Richard Gott, a long-standing Guardian journalist

and then the paper's literary editor, had been a paid agent of the KGB, had met KGB agents and had accepted airline flights from the Soviet intelligence organisation. In 1997 it was revealed by another renegade officer, David Shayler, that MI5 had investigated The Guardian's now foreign editor, Victoria Brittain, after she had allowed Kojo Tsikata, head of the Ghanaian security forces to channel Libyan funds for a libel suit against The Independent through her personal bank account in London. Again The Spectator (now edited by Frank Johnson) took up cudgels – its media columnist, Stephen Glover, became Britain's most vocal and probing critic.

It would be stretching a point to say that the paper's interest in raising allegations about Mr Lawson was revenge for the pain he had inflicted on them over the Gott affair. Nevertheless, Lawson's name in the MI6 frame was greeted with a liberal amount of abuse.

After all, he had used the Gott story to inflict maximum grief on the paper. At the time, he denied that the story had been inspired by either the Conservative Party or Jonathan Aitken. In an editorial, Lawson said he had published the allegations because Mr Gott had abused the trust readers placed in him as an eminent journalist. The Spectator acknowledged that Gott had committed no offence in meeting KGB agents and his actions raised no issue of national security.

Although Lawson's name was in wide circulation among media people, there was a problem. Given Britain's Draconian libel laws, how could the allegations get into the public domain? This was solved by two MPs who, protected by parliamentary privilege, named Lawson in the House of Commons on Wednesday.

The first, the Labour MP Brian Sedgemore (Hackney South and Shoreditch), raised the name during a debate on the Freedom of Information Act. In a carefully phrased statement, Sedgemore said: "I would hope we would have some time between now and Christmas to look at the claim that Dominic Lawson, the editor of The Sunday Telegraph, has been recruited as a paid MI6 agent. That seems a very odd thing. It would be very damaging for the press if it were true. It's an allegation being made by Mr Richard Tomlinson. I've no idea whether it is true, but it surely is something we should look at."

George Galloway (Glasgow, Kelvin), was the second Labour MP to name Lawson. He put down an Early Day Motion and several questions. This gave the press the opportunity to print the story. The Guardian then went more heavily on the front page, and on an inside page.

The question arises whether Sedgemore and Galloway had been put up to naming Dominic Lawson using parliamentary privilege. Sedgemore denied this to The Independent, and Galloway said last night: "My source is much closer to MI6 than Farringdon Road [where The Guardian is based]. This is a source I trust, who named Lawson."

However, the problem that is raised by such allegations is that they are very difficult to prove.

Continued on page 8

SUTTER HOME

CALIFORNIA ZINFANDEL

The ideal accompaniment to turkey.

A bottle of Sutter Home California Zinfandel wine is shown next to a plate of food and a glass of wine.



The story in Thursday's 'Guardian', following the naming of Dominic Lawson (above), editor of 'The Sunday Telegraph', in the House of Commons

CALIFORNIA

ZINFANDEL

Stuff the turkey.



SUTTER HOME CALIFORNIA WINES.
They don't need food to make sense.

INSIDE

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Attack on Iraq

Sir: On the eve of the season of goodwill, a discredited president without a shred of moral credibility, on the point of facing a vote on impeachment, unilaterally orders a vengeful attack on a smaller country already devastated by the effects of war and crippling sanctions. This tawdry appeal to the basest forms of "patriotism" is indeed the last refuge of a scoundrel.

DOUGLAS WILLIAMS
Wrexham, Cymru

Sir: I did not vote for Tony Blair for him to bomb Iraq. If the glove-puppet of Britain has America's fist inserted so far up its rear that we are the only Security Council member in active and open support of this action, then I feel embarrassed to be British. Mr Blair speaks of the need for "safety and stability" and I presume he can only be referring to Mr Clinton's term in office, for blowing up other countries does not promote peace and understanding.

CHRIS THORNE
London N7

Sir: The pantomime season is upon us, and once again the British and American governments have resuscitated their favourite pantomime demon, Saddam Hussein, all to bring to an early close that other long-running show: impeachment. How many Iraqis must die to save the neck of one American? There were no grounds for impeaching Bill Clinton before Wednesday night. By manufacturing a military campaign for personal political advantage, he has shown his utter unfitness for the highest office. He should resign at once.

ALASTAIR MEIKES
London SE13

Sir: No, "the West" has not launched air strikes against Baghdad, as your headline (17 December) claims. The West consists of more than merely one trigger-happy nation acting with the cowed support of another.

GEOFF THOMASON
Stockport, Cheshire

Sir: Britain and the US are now bombing Iraqi nuclear and chemical weapon sites. Bombs on Aldermaston, or Sellafield, or Douray, or on our nuclear power plants would render the UK uninhabitable for the realistic future. Do our leaders have no scientific knowledge and no imagination? By this attack they have set a new precedent in the escalation of destruction. We will all reap the after-effects.

IAN CAMPBELL
THALIA CAMPBELL
Borth, Cardiganshire

Sir: When the congressional committee decided to press for the impeachment of President Clinton, we laughed and said, "The only way he can get out of this is to declare war on somebody." Less than a week later, he has declared war; and guess what, impeachment has been postponed. When will our idiotic government learn?

MARY COLE
St Leonards, East Sussex

Sir: Is it unreasonable of me to expect the US to be a fully paid-up member of the United Nations, before launching an attack on Iraq?

D STIFFORD
Waltham St Lawrence, Berkshire

Sir: Clinton unzips his fly in Washington and a couple of years later a few hundred people die in Baghdad. Is this the final proof of Chaos Theory?

LEE ALLANE
London SW2

This vegan no wimp

Sir: It is true that, following his withdrawal from hunger strike, Barry Horne is not suffering irreversible damage to his body (report, 14 December), then all I can say is, he is one hell of an advertisement for the vegan diet he has followed for more than a decade.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity



Christmas Workers No 5: the volunteer 'Adie' and 'Mr Toad' stack mattresses at a disused bus depot in south London which will serve as a shelter for the homeless over Christmas week

Tom Pilston

Nobody has suggested that he ate solid food, merely that he used sugared water, sweetened tea and fruit juice at one brief moment. He must have been possessed of a level of health to begin with that puts two fingers up to those who think we vegans are all whey-faced and reliant on supplements to avoid life-threatening malnutrition. And Mr Horne is not a young man: he is 46.

If we don't yet have our Royal Commission on animal experiments, we at least have in Barry Horne, who has put his body through the ultimate fitness test, living proof of the healthiness of the vegan diet.

VALERIE PAYNTER
Hove, East Sussex

Sir: Further to Stanley Tyrer's letter (10 December), the argument that the slave trade acquired a pseudo-justification by producing profits for some has no conceivable parallel in the animal rights controversy. Slave labour could be replaced by other human labour, but there is no substitute for a living organism to give us the production of mono-clonal or other antibiotics, on which all future therapeutics depends.

DR F HILLMAN FRCP FRCPATH
Appleby Bridge, Lancashire

Sir: Teachers are indeed undervalued by society and this is reflected in the poor remuneration they receive. However, ambitious young science students risk disappointment if they select medicine as a career on the basis of the facts cited by Stephen Usherwood (letter, 14 December).

The salary of £12,000 reflects an "A+" merit award, held by less than 1 per cent of hospital consultants; the standard contracted week is 44 hours, in addition to which there are on-call commitments, without further pay, even if these involve operating at night in addition to day-time duties. Most consultants work closer to 60 than 35 hours, more are leaving prematurely than ever before and doctors, as a group, have one of the highest suicide rates.

Medicine is a relatively well paid profession and most of us still find it rewarding, but it is not as your

Sir: Can we be assured that the new set of Law Lords assembled to judge Pinochet's extradition will not be influenced by the pro-amnesty views of the Conservative Party of Lady Thatcher and Mr Hague?

DOUG WOODWARD
Beckenham, Kent

Sir: Your report that the young "are lazy, fat and drink too much" (15 December) is

before a dance or party. The record will imply that he is a drug dealer. The purpose of a criminal record is to allow a judge to apply an appropriate sentence after a subsequent conviction. Hopefully the judge has the necessary skill, experience and judgement to use this information fairly in context. No employer will have this.

DR ANNA CASSONI
London SW13

correspondent portrays it. I fully support initiatives to make teachers more highly valued and to attract the best into the profession, but it is not right to belittle another profession to do so?

TIM CORDY
Newark, Nottinghamshire

Keep them out!

Sir: By and large, I enjoy David Aaronovitch's blend of humour and wisdom; but I do believe this most recent argument to be self-defeating ("Who are these asylum-seeking scum?" They're people like my grandparents", 15 December).

As I understand it, a more rigorous set of immigration conditions would have disallowed the entry into this country of David's paternal grandparents, and that we as a consequence would lose the benefit of his sagacity. He then adds that the same stringent laws would also have deprived us of Michael Howard and Nicholas van Hoogstraten.

Now as far as I am concerned, that's a price worth paying.

ANDREW MCKENZIE
Woking, Surrey

Sir: I have nothing but praise for David Aaronovitch's statement of the moral argument. But can I ask that one of your other wonderful columnists, Hamish McRae, puts forward the economic argument? Surely there is a mass of data

testifying to the energy and enterprise of economic migrants – and to the contribution that such people make to their new country.

MR CORRY
Newark, Nottinghamshire

Scots in Europe

Sir: If the UK has already joined the Single European Currency before Scotland becomes an independent state (letters, 14 December), it is inconceivable that Scotland will not immediately be granted full membership of the European Union.

ANDREW BROOK
London SW12

Sir: Am I simply paranoid in detecting an assumption in Scottish nationalist thinking that England somehow wants to "hang on to" Scotland? I have yet to see one good reason why England should remain fettered to Scotland (except as an act of charity) and wonder if it is too late to organise a referendum on English independence – within the EU, of course.

GEOFFREY THOMPSON
London SE13

Yuletide gloom

Sir: It is with a heavy heart that I write to you. I seek guidance about Christmas.

I hear nothing but "Christmas

is for the children." I just happen to be 53 years old; my kids are grown and married. Indeed, they have blessed me with four grandchildren. But everyone still tells me that Christmas is for the children. What about me? I remember the time when

Christmas was really a time for

"Peace on earth, goodwill to all men", when adults experienced a feeling of great personal satisfaction from the simple act of being seasonally nice to someone.

Christmas, for me, consists of about half an hour watching my grandchildren opening their presents. Has Mammon really replaced God to such an extent

that adults are now almost forbidden by law to enjoy the festive season?

DEREK WELCH
St Albans, Hertfordshire

Divided island

Sir: The peaceful co-existence that endured between the majority of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots before the tragic events of 1974 is often overlooked ("Divided they stand, separated by eternal hatred and suspicion", 10 December).

There is even substantial evidence that on many occasions Greek Cypriots sheltered Turkish Cypriots from the violence perpetrated by the Greek-sponsored Eoka B organisation during the attempted Greek colonels' coup to overthrow the Cypriot President.

This spirit of peaceful co-existence was only interrupted by the illegal invasion and occupation carried out by the Turkish mainland in response to the coup. The Turkish Cypriots have now largely fled their homeland, leaving the majority of Northern Cyprus inhabited by Turks from the mainland, and it is towards them and not the Turkish Cypriots that Greek Cypriot animosity is directed.

SPENCER A GRADY
London CR2

Aid and politics

Sir: Julie Flint is right to remind us of the plight of the Nuba in her article "Are human rights an optional extra?" (9 December). However, her analysis suffers from a few omissions.

Aid is not confined to Sudan's northern region alone. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), as well as dozens of humanitarian agencies outside its mandate, operates on a massive scale on both sides of the conflict and has done so since the war's inception. In "off-limits" areas of the Nuba Mountains, non-OLS aid organisations such as Norwegian People's Aid, risk their lives to bring aid to the Nuba people. But Flint is right to point out that the big humanitarian agencies which make up OLS are still denied official access to these areas. Until this issue is resolved, the suffering will continue.

The good news is that humanitarians are not silent about this. Most recently, four leading NGOs including CARE International testified before the United Nations Security Council asking for, among other things, political action to improve access to victims on both sides. The Nuba Mountains were specifically mentioned.

The Nuba Mountains need help; their people have suffered for far too long. Humanitarian aid, adherence to human rights and a sincere effort to find political solutions to the war in Sudan are essential to end the suffering. The Sudanese people need them all and need them now.

WILL DAY
National Director
CARE International UK
London WC2

Embassy bombing

Sir: Neville Nagler, director general of the Board of Deputies of British Jews (letter, 4 December), tries to give the impression that Samir Alami, believed by many to have been wrongfully convicted of involvement in the 1994 London bombing of the Israeli embassy, was motivated by anti-Jewish feeling and supported the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in its terrorist attacks of the 1970s.

Many recall her tireless work for human rights. Her campaigning for Palestinian freedoms has nothing to do with religion or anti-Jewish feelings. She had been interested in the PFLP in the late 1980s and has made no secret of this. The PFLP is now a mainstream political party and renounced all military activity outside the occupied territories in the late 1970s, at least a decade before Ms Alami considered joining.

Mr Nagler refers to the appalling atrocity carried out in Argentina, a week before the 1994 London bombings, in which 96 people were killed in an explosion at a Buenos Aires Jewish centre. Speculation that there was some connection between the explosions in Buenos Aires and London evaporated when it emerged that the Argentine bombings were motivated by anti-Semitism.

DANIEL GUELDALLA
London E8

Marathon scandal

Sir: Martin Mottram may be on to something when he asks (letter, 11 December) whether the original Marathon runner had consumed performance-enhancing drugs. According to Robert Browning's poem *Pheidippides*, "fennel a-tremble with dew" seems to have been the main substance.

However, as with all drug-related cases, the causes of death are complex. It seems that before proceeding to the fennel/dew cocktail, Pheidippides had been on oak, olive and hay which, when enwreathed, make the brows bold: The Turkish Cypriots have now largely fled their homeland, leaving the majority of Northern Cyprus inhabited by Turks from the mainland, and it is towards them and not the Turkish Cypriots that Greek Cypriot animosity is directed.

Nevertheless, on the actual death certificate Browning recorded "joy in his blood" as "bursting his heart".

DAVID WALLACE
Hove, East Sussex

Unlike our bossy proverbs, Albanian ones lack meaning

I HAVE received some requests from readers for a further selection of Albanian proverbs, which I think shows very good taste on their part, and I am happy to oblige.

(In case any reader has not encountered traditional Albanian proverbs before, I must just remind you that they are very different from ours. Ours are very bossy and practical – look before you leap, don't count your chickens till they're hatched, etc – but theirs are a bit more poetic, a lot more unhelpful and sometimes apparently meaningless.)

Anyway, less talk, more words. (Which, as it happens, is also an old Albanian proverb.) Here goes!

*
There is nothing random about a random police breath test. Have

you noticed that they stop only motorists and no-one else?

*

The mango weeps in the fruit bowl because it is forgotten.

*

The medieval warrior got up in the morning and went to work in a suit of armour. That is why it is called a suit. It may look glamourous now, but then it was just a suit.

*

Three axioms for our time: working breakfast, fun run and sporting personality.

*

A tall man wearing a hat looks even taller but a small man wearing a hat looks like a small man wearing a hat.

If we all had eyes in the back of our heads, our cars would have at least four different reverse gears – and no mirrors.

*

If Christmas cards arrived at any other time of the year, they would be classed as junk mail.

*

There is no such thing in nature as a lawn.

*

The only fate really worse than death is immortality.

*

We take it for granted that period costume drama is only set in the past, but all science fiction is period costume drama based on history which has not yet happened. Thanks to science fiction, we can now be nostalgic for the future.

MILES KINGSTON

The mango weeps in the fruit bowl because it is forgotten – this is poetic but rather unhelpful

JP 150

Everyone knows what a Stanley knife is, but nobody knows who Stanley was.

*

If the stuff written by Shakespeare was blank verse, what is blank prose?

*

Marketing: the art of selling a non-stop cholesterol-choked fry-up by renaming it "the all-day English breakfast".

*

Which way does a banana bend?

*

A man who falls off a ladder always hits the ground and hurts himself, but a man who walks under a ladder only hurts himself if the man

ping, but what do you call it if you go out buying windows?

*

What does a fake antique become when it reaches its hundredth birthday? An antique fake antique? And therefore a real one?

*

A conductor shaves for the benefit of the orchestra, but he gets the back of his hair cut for the whole audience.

*

There was a time when "retro" suddenly became the term for everything that is old-fashioned and vaguely nostalgic, but nobody uses the word any more, presumably because it has become old-fashioned and vaguely nostalgic...

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Futile, possibly, but how else do we deal with this dictator?

WHAT NEXT? That is the overriding question, once the cruise missiles, the smart bombs and the rest of the West's deadly military hardware cease to rain out of the skies over Iraq. The attacks launched by Britain and America will probably go down as the futile end of a futile policy, dictated by the depressing logic of all that has gone before. Almost certainly, they will not eradicate Saddam Hussein's ability to make his weapons of mass destruction. They will contribute nothing to stability in the region. And then there are the suspicions that Mr Clinton cynically unleashed his armies to distract attention from the expected House vote to make him only the second President in history sent to face an impeachment trial in the Senate.

These may well serve only to increase Saddam's popularity among his own people and in the radical Arab world. The true goal of Western policy (once again publicly disavowed, as we visit more misery on the wretched Iraqi people) is the removal of Saddam from power. But the air attacks may only make that prospect more remote.

And yet, at this stage, Washington and London had no alternative. To link the bombing with impending impeachment is to carry conspiracy theorising too far. Even in normal circumstances, events would surely have followed the same course. Not to have used force, after the threats that went before, would have made a mockery of American credibility. If anything, the allies should have gone ahead with the attack that was called off at the last moment on 14 November. The only surprise – and it is a small one – about this showdown is how soon it occurred. To have gone through the usual cycle of warnings would merely have allowed Saddam more time to prevaricate and shift incriminating material out of harm's way. In short, while this is Clinton's war, it is not Monica's war.

But, assuming the onslaught is the "strong and sustained" affair we are promised, it will perchance change how we deal with Saddam. Quite clearly, the era of UN inspections will be over, and probably not before time. For one thing, if the reasons given for this week's attack are to be believed, they have not achieved their aim. Moreover, Saddam will no longer be able to provoke a crisis whenever he likes by denying access to one of his presidential palaces. Finally, the inspectors unwillingly bestowed on Saddam an importance he does not deserve. In Mr Clinton's unconvincing address on Wednesday evening, nothing rang more hollowly than his description of Iraq as a regional superpower and a threat to world peace. The regional superpowers around those parts are Israel (richly endowed with nuclear and chemical weapons) and Iran and Turkey, countries overwhelmingly more populous than Iraq; in terms of military strength Saddam is a shadow of the man who was routed in 1991.



Yes, Iraq has used weapons of mass destruction before. But its leader knows today that the release of a single spore of anthrax would bring shattering, and unanimously approved, retaliation from the West. Which is, of course, why he dared not use them in 1991.

So once this attack is over – with, we can only pray, the smallest possible loss of civilian lives – we have a chance to build a new Iraq policy, whose means at last fit their declared end. The sanctions that have helped prevent Saddam rebuilding his conventional forces – but which do not stop him buying food and medical supplies for his people – may have to continue. But the explicit aim of the West must henceforth be his removal from power.

The means to this end, including the indictment of Saddam as a war criminal and the encouragement of opposition both inside and outside Iraq, will require diplomacy and patience. However, they offer more hope of long-term success than the heavy crump of cruise missiles exploding around Baghdad.

The important principle is justice, not revenge

HISTORY HAS repeated itself in the House of Lords: first as tragedy (for General Pinochet); second as farce (for everyone concerned). The unanimous decision by the senior judges in the same court that Augusto Pinochet can be extradited for alleged human rights crimes committed while the head of state of Chile, seems, on the face of it, to have undermined a promising development of the law. And the fault – for fault it certainly was (on this we have no disagreement with yesterday's judgment) – was with the liberals' own champion, Lord Hoffmann. His overweening self-confidence in his own righteousness must have blinded him to how others would see his connections and his wife's connections with Amnesty International, an organisation that was

campaigning (and appearing as a witness before him) to have Pinochet extradited to face trial in Spain.

Still, a second look at the results of yesterday's decision might yet give cause for hope. After all, the principle at stake in these proceedings is not revenge but justice. The core issue is that international law should be so developed that tyrannical leaders anywhere in the world have good reason to fear that they will be held personally responsible for crimes against humanity carried out by their henchmen. What was so cheering about last month's verdict was that this vital principle, originally proclaimed at the Nuremberg Trials, was being carried forward in our own times.

Now, the legal arguments will be heard again by a court that has shown it is more concerned to do justice – and to be seen to do justice – than it is to reach any particular result regarding the defendant before it. If a new panel of Law Lords comes to the same verdict as the previous panel, the important precedent that seemed to have been established last month will have been entrenched all the deeper.

Our special relationship with America is stuck in a time-warp

IN A year's time will it be President Clinton or Saddam Hussein who is still in power? The question hangs over the increasingly familiar political choreography of war in Britain.

The Commons met in "some mood"; the political correspondents huddled outside Downing Street to give us the latest information from Prime Ministerial spokesmen; defence correspondents had the word from the MoD; the BBC offered extended news reporting what had happened and speculating on what would happen next. But nobody could answer my question, although the future of Britain's foreign policy depends upon it.

For underlying the unanswerable question lies one which the British Government needs to address once the immediate crisis has passed: what are we doing in this special relationship with such an unreliable and unpredictable country as the US and how does the relationship fit in with Britain's role in Europe?

In Washington, Clinton was vindicated repeatedly by the ballot box but rails against a system which condemns him to near impotence. Abroad he raises his warning finger against a grotesque tyrant who takes no notice. In terms of his domestic politics he has no armoury left. Do not believe for a moment that Clinton took his eye off the ball, intoxicated by sustained support in the polls. Clinton could have massaged Republican egos, soothed Republican souls and still face impeachment.

The voters are a peripheral sideshow as they have been throughout

the Clinton presidency. They voted him in, they endorsed his programmes and then the American constitution prevented him from carrying much of it out. Health service reforms? No way. Gays in the military? Forget it. Step back from impeachment prompted initially by a trivial presidential fling? Not a chance.

It will be much easier for the Republicans to remove Clinton from office than it will be for anyone to remove Saddam Hussein. Yet, apart from the removal of Saddam, is there any other justifiable end game which inflames, divides and costs lives? It is a truly nightmarish situation. A violation of international law demanded a response, but one is seemingly unavailable to America and Britain that will result in the removal of Saddam.

If anything the reverse is the case, and military action will bolster, at least temporarily, his situation. In the short term, Tony Blair had no choice, given all the previous threats and the way they have been treated with such deceit, but to sanction air strikes. The finger-wagging had to be hacked up with this time. But how Britain got itself into a situation where joint military action with the US became the only option demands wider reflection.

For once it is a war being contested without any obvious immediate political consequences in Britain, except conceivably negative ones for the Government if events go badly wrong. With Blair standing so high in the polls already there can be no "Falklands Factor", which helped the Iron Lady rise from the depths of unpopularity to electoral invincibility. Politics was



STEVE RICHARDS

This small island of medium economic clout is always there with its expensive armoury alongside the US

never quite the same again after her military adventure in 1982, although she would still have won the following year's election easily because of the schism on the left.

Nor will there a "Gulf war" factor that produced record-breaking personal ratings for John Major and so encouraged Michael Heseltine to press for an early "khaki election" in 1991. Sensibly, Major decided not to take up the jingoistic mantle, but his Prime Ministerial status was underpinned by war.

For Blair there is only one way to go in the polls, and that is down. If the operation is a success, his image as a strong leader will no doubt be reinforced. But it is already so firmly embedded in voters' minds that a further surge in the polls is unlikely and politically irrelevant. Labour enjoys a

seemingly impregnable lead and, anyway, the election is still far away.

What is more, the support amongst Labour MPs for the action is stronger than in previous crises. I am told, for example, that Clare Short, a baronial figure (as she resigned from the front bench in protest at Labour's support for military action in 1991), veers on the hawkish side now.

But the "special relationship" will require a rethink in the months ahead.

In terms of benefits for Britain it has never been particularly "special" unless personal chemistry intervened. America was a reluctant ally in the Falklands.

On his election George Bush showed where his interests lay with a visit to Germany, a more important economic power, long before Britain got a look in. The Blair/Clinton relationship is genuinely strong, based on a shared political outlook and several displays of mutual practical support, not least in Northern Ireland.

The impact of Clinton on British politics has also been underestimated. New Labour would not have existed in quite this form without him. But a rapport between two leaders should not in itself determine foreign policy, which remains stuck in the the early 1950s, the policy of Eden's three interlocking circles where, uniquely, Britain would punch above its weight by having distinct relations with Europe, the US and the Commonwealth.

So, whenever there is an international crisis, this small underperforming island of medium economic clout is there with its hugely expensive armoury alongside the US.

Compared, say, with Holland or Sweden, Britain's transport is shambolic, its schools run down and much of its housing squalid. As its European partners prepare to form potentially the most powerful currency in the world, Britain looks on confused and wary. But when it comes to military action, we are always ready to act, weighed down by the military heroism of the past and our refusal to live up to a more mundane standing in the modern world.

Labour's programme of modernisation needs to revisit foreign policy once this crisis has passed. For a while there has been talk of an ethical foreign policy (although Robin Cook revealed to me in an interview recently that he had always sought instead an "ethical dimension" to foreign policy) and there has been a much more positive approach to Europe, but there is still an appetite for military might well above economic status.

When the Treasury sought savings in Britain's defence budget as part of its public-spending review it returned empty-handed. Even under New Labour Britannia has to rule the waves and the skies, albeit as partner.

If the answer to my opening question is that Saddam is dead and buried in a year's time, while Clinton is still in office, the events of recent days will be viewed, retrospectively, in a glowing light. I fear, however, that the dictator will still be in his bunker while an elected President will have been forcibly removed.

The author is political editor of the *New Statesman*

THE CLINTON Administration said it would strike without warning if Iraq did not honour its promise to co-operate with inspectors. It has been very circumspect as Saddam flouted the inspectors over the past few weeks. In all cases, the White House has said its timing has been dictated by circumstance. It is impossible to disprove, but this conflict does remain the greatest coincidence yet. *Sydney Morning Herald, Australia*

WHY WAS such military action necessary now, or more to the point, necessary at all? After almost eight years of sanctions and inspections, Saddam is still in power. The US and Britain believe Iraq still has the capability of assembling weapons of mass destruction. Over one million people against whom no one held any grudge are dead. When does it end? Commentators last night expressed surprise that Iraqi people were moving around

Baghdad during the attack. It shouldn't come as a surprise – after all, they are the only ones who have had to endure the last eight years. *Jordan Times*

THE DECISION to launch military strikes against Iraq is unimpeachable. As brave Americans and Britons wage war, the only appropriate response is one of unconditional

support. There is no more important challenge for the civilized world at the close of the millennium than to ensure that Saddam Hussein and evil thugs like him cannot employ weapons of mass destruction. Any steps taken in that direction are to be welcomed, and these new air strikes are indeed steps toward a safer world. *New York Post, US*

THE IRAQIS, wearied by years of tension, shrugged off the threat of imminent military strikes that could devastate their country. "We are not frightened any more. Whatever happens, we are not going to lose anything," said one Iraqi trader. His comments echoed those of many Baghdad residents who have lived through war, sanctions and a series of crises with the United Nations which has taken Iraq to the brink of military confrontation already three times this year. *Middle East Times, Egypt*

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

International opinions on the British and American air strikes on Iraq

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We must act to counter a real and present danger from a tyrant who has never hesitated to use whatever weapons come to hand." Tony Blair, Prime Minister

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"The weak have one weapon: the errors of those who think they are strong." Georges Bidault, French statesman

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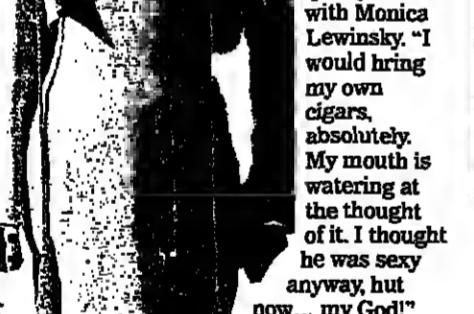
PANDORA

WHEN THE Prime Minister appeared on television on Wednesday evening to announce that Britain had launched a "substantial" air attack on Iraq, neither BBC1 nor BBC2 bothered to interrupt their scheduled programmes. It was, however, carried live on ITN, Sky News and CNN. Blair's speech was first aired in taped form on national BBC television during *Newsnight*, some minutes later. Pandora was intrigued by the corporation's rationale for deciding that the Government's declaration of war in the Middle East was less important than the ski resort potboiler *War and Peace* (BBC1) or the soft-core body show *Naked* (BBC2).

After many telephone enquiries yesterday, Pandora uncovered a fair degree of internal confusion. "It was carried live on Radio 4 and Radio 5," said John Steel, BBC News press officer, continuing, "With a network like the BBC, it makes sense to break into programmes at different times. The programmers and the news team talk to each other intensively on these matters. The news team can't just hijack the schedule." But Charlotte Ashton, deputy head of BBC Publicity, disagreed. "Oh, I am surprised they are saying that. They [BBC News] crash into programming all the time. Well, maybe not all the time but it happens." Not this time, it didn't. "I'm astonished that the number one public service provider did not carry the statement live," said Tory MP Roger Gale, a member of the Broadcasting Select Committee. "It is incredibly ironic that *War and Peace* was at the same time."

THE LIBYAN strongman Col Muammar Gaddafi's son, al-Saadi, went on a most enjoyable shopping spree in Paris a week or so back. On assignment to purchase aircraft, al-Saadi and his entourage boated up in the Hotel Crillon and partied at the lavish Al Mawal nightclub, eventually running up about £200,000-worth of expenses over a 10-day period. Given that Papa Gaddafi does not approve of his officials behaving like wealthy oil sheiks while the Libyan people suffer from international sanctions, perhaps the hill for al-Saadi's excursion was picked up by other interested private parties?

SEX UNDOUBTEDLY sells magazines, but Pandora had assumed that the high-brow monthly *Prospect* was above such base concerns. Apparently not, for



THE EMOTIVE singer Sinead O'Connor (pictured) has told *The Independent's* sister newspaper in Ireland that she's carrying a torch for the precariously perched US President. The unpredictably romantic Sinead has felt that Bill Clinton "is the sexiest man in the universe" ever since she read the details of his quirky affair with Monica Lewinsky. "I would bring my own cigars, absolutely. My mouth is watering at the thought of it. I thought he was sexy anyway, but now... my God!"

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the mag's latest issue carries - alongside weighty contributions from Vassil Havel, Simon Jenkins, Nigel Lawson and this newspaper's own Anne McElroy - a raunchy "sexual diary from inside Wandsworth prison" by the convict/columnist Peter Wayne. As explicit as anything on the top shelf, the piece offers an uncontrite celebration of a homosexual convict's lifestyle during the Eighties at the outset of the Aids epidemic - plus a concluding paragraph that shows little has changed in 1998. "It is night; one in a thousand nights of close confinement. There's a boy in my cell. He's young. He's attractive, he's willing to go... Both we know there's no turning back." Odd, too, that another article in the same issue, "A Pornographic Culture" attacks Britain's sexual freedom that "instead of liberating us... is enslaving us".

IT'S BEEN a duff quip a minute. Yesterday we reported on his off-the-cuff remark that his job, not his new bride, was the "number one passion" in his life. At the Foreign Secretary's Christmas party on Wednesday evening, he told the jolly gathering that it had been a "very strange year", a very entertaining year". He had visited 29 countries and spent 178 hours in the air, circling the globe the equivalent of two-and-a-half times. "The worst thing is that I haven't been able to collect any air miles." Later, when one journalist suggested that the sudden decision to bomb Iraq would provoke many *Wag the Dog* jokes, Cookie confessed total ignorance of the film and the phrase. Perhaps if he took Gaynor out to the cinema more often, it would brighten up his own repartee a bit.

PHILIP HENSHER

These lists are designed to reassure us that the moment we inhabit is the most important

Judges must declare their interests



CONOR GEARTY
In ethical cases under the Human Rights Act, a judges' links to pressure groups will matter hugely

IT IS always exciting when a famously brainy person displays the intelligence of an under-achieving amoeba. There is something about such fallibility that gives strength to the rest of us, tiding away in our dull routine, cruelly handicapped by our all too ordinary minds. Lord Hoffman's moral qualities are clear for all to see, and his personal integrity remains unscathed by yesterday's decision to re-open the Pinochet proceedings because of his undeclared connection with Amnesty International. Lord Hoffman's legal virtuousness is legendary and doubtless will remain so, but it is his misfortune that it will be for his political judgement (or rather the lack of it) that he will now forever be remembered.

It is hard to see how Lord Browne-Wilkinson and his colleagues, hearing yesterday's appeal, could have done other than overturn the Lords' earlier ruling. Lord Hoffman had failed to declare both a personal and a family involvement in an organisation that was permitted to address the brief directly from a strongly anti-Pinochet perspective. Not only this, but he was reportedly

heavily engaged in the argument in the case in a way that had underpinned that organisation's legal submission. His was the vital vote in a case in which the end result had been very controversial, drawing strong dissenting judgments from two law lords, and being at variance with an earlier ruling by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham and two of his colleagues in the High

Court. If justice must not only be done, but also be seen to be done, then it is hard to see how the original decision could have been allowed to stand.

The rehearing in the new year will presumably have to disregard the judgements of the first House of Lords decision, treating them as though they have never existed. The rhetoric of Lords Steyn and Nicholls, which so excited the legal world just a few weeks ago, has been consigned by Lord Hoffman's blunder into a kind of legal limbo, from where they must scream silently for the attention of future jurists. The extent to which they are implicitly acknowledged in the fresh judgments will be one of the fascinating aspects of the new hearing.

In the longer term, Lord Hoffman may have done his colleagues a good turn by alerting them to how their world has changed. In the latter years of dank Tory rule, the judges became accustomed to participating in civil society as the patrons or supporters of a variety of vaguely liberal bodies, dealing with human rights, European law, penal reform and the like. It was partly through

these activities, and the public speeches and appearances that went with them, that the judges managed to reconstruct themselves as open, modern and friendly after Spycatcher and the miscarriage of justice catastrophes that had engulfed them in the Eighties.

This civic engagement may now need to be re-thought, particularly in view of the recently enacted Human Rights Act, due to come into force in a little over a year. This legislation invites the judges to assume a far more activist role in guiding our parliamentary democracy as to the ethical solutions to various problems previously thought entirely political. In cases on abortion, euthanasia, torture, free speech and the like, it will matter enormously which judges hear which cases and to which pressure groups and research bodies they belong.

There is a strong convention in the UK constitution that judges should not be politically active in the formal sense of being engaged in one or other of our traditional political parties. It may be that the Hoffman catastrophe shows that the time has come to bring this

convention up-to-date, so as to reflect the fact that politics in these post-Modern days is fought out across society as a whole and not just between traditional, monolithic class enemies.

There is another dimension to this judicial activism, as well. In the last 15 years, the judges have also allowed themselves to become involved in various extra-judicial roles involving the control of telephone tapping, the security service and other aspects of the secret state. Many of them have seen fit to accept appointment to review sensitive political issues, such as the future of the UK's counter-terrorism laws and the culpability of the army for the events of Bloody Sunday. These activities should be carefully reassessed in light of the new political and judicial climate. It is a judge's job to judge, not to campaign, investigate or whitewash on behalf of others. This needs to be remembered or there is the chance that a series of Hoffman-esque debacles may lie ahead.

The writer is professor of human rights law at King's College London

Sandwiched between Mother Teresa and Genghis Khan



PHILIP HENSHER
These lists are designed to reassure us that the moment we inhabit is the most important

HISTORY AS they say, is what you can remember. The company responsible for the Millennium Dome has been trying to raise excitement by producing a television advert, which lists a decidedly odd selection of the most significant events of the last 1,000 years. Of course, they are not put forward in any serious spirit, but their eccentricity still makes you wonder about the sanity of the people in charge of this peculiar enterprise. First are the Easter Island statues. Then Westminster Abbey, Michelangelo, Sir Walter Raleigh's discovery of the potato, Shakespeare's sonnets, the invention of the sandwich, Florence Nightingale, Mother Teresa, John Logie Baird, man on the moon, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of apartheid.

Hmm. A curious list, this, distinguished mainly by the incredible restraint which prevented the organisers including the Apothecaries of Tony Blair somewhere between the sandwich and the potato. The list mostly constitutes events achieved in or by the English-speaking world - I wonder who, outside England, would think of Westminster Abbey as constituting one of the most significant events even of the 11th century, let alone the millennium. I mean, there's nothing wrong with the building, but I can't entirely see the world-shaking significance of it.

Odder still is the fact that almost half the list seems to have taken place in our lifetime. I suppose putting a man on the moon was quite an interesting thing to do, but Mother Teresa? Is the end of apartheid to be compared to the end of slavery? The inclusion of the sandwich is, surely, mostly to do with changes in our eating habits over the last fifteen years, and will look very odd indeed the next time our eating habits change.

The fall of the Berlin Wall is a

more awkward fact to deal with. Certainly, the great flourishing of Marxist government deserves some kind of memorial, and one understands that the makers of television commercials want to be upbeat. But it's still hard to justify including an awkward fact with uncertain consequences like the fall of Eastern Europe to capitalism, rather than, say, the Russian Revolution, or, for that matter, the French.

The more one looks at these sorts of lists, of course, the more one realises that they are chiefly designed not to give us some kind of grasp on history but to reassure ourselves that the moment in history we inhabit is the most important.

The fall of the Berlin Wall was

certainly a huge event, but its

inclusion in preference to the Battle of Waterloo, say, can only be due to the fact that Sholto Douglas-Hamilton, the marketing director of the New Millennium Experience Company, recalls seeing the one on television and not the other. It is something one might term the "Michael Owen" effect; the certain knowledge that, if

one asked any group of schoolboys who the most significant personality of the last thousand years was, they would not come up with Napoleon or Darwin but with this year's fashionable footballer.

But all the same, it isn't entirely a pointless exercise, though the New Millennium Experience Company has done its best to make it seem so. It has the potential to be a much more meaningful list than, say, the 100 greatest novels or the best films ever made. History is meaningful, as the philosophers say, and some events have much more significance than others, produce greater consequences. I've come up with 10 events in history which might be on a serious list; only one happened in the 20th century, which might seem eccentric. It's right, though, to leave things out for the same reason that General de Gaulle is said to have refused to make any comment on the French Revolution; it's too early to tell.

First comes Alberti's codification of linear perspective and the vanishing point, after which no-one in the West ever looked at the world in the same way again. A universal shift in human perception like the one brought about by Alberti is, surely, the biggest event one can conceive of after *De Pictura*, the world, and not just the means of its representation, was transformed.

Gutenberg's invention of movable type should be in anyone's list. Before Gutenberg, books were precious objects; afterwards, they were bearers of thought.

Next is the fall of Constantinople, which led to the Renaissance and the rediscovery of the learning of the ancients in Europe. People will tell you that the Middle Ages knew about the ancients, and some, such as Avicenna, sort of did; the crucial thing was the systematic nature

of the Renaissance's learning. Then we have the Battle of Lepanto - the reason Europe is Christian and not Islamic - and the conversion of Iran and the return of Khomeini from exile, the consequences of which are only now beginning to be felt.

The discovery of anaesthetics is up there - I mean, just imagine the alternative, as is the Seven Years War, which is the reason the British had an empire, to everyone's benefit, and the reason the world speaks English and not French.

Then there is the realist novel, which is the greatest triumph of Western literature, and which, like Alberti's momentous discovery, changed the way everyone thinks of their own lives.

It hardly matters which example you choose, whether it be *War and Peace* or *Der Zauberberg* or *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*; the crucial thing is the discovery of the form and the decisive break with the imagination of the past. Shakespeare's sonnets are the continuation of an ancient project; Stendhal is something new.

The two last events on my list, however, are rather unquantifiable. The first is something we conveniently call "the death of God", the way God disappeared from the Western mind at some point in the late 19th century, leaving Darwin and Freud and a proper, grown-up respect for truth.

The last is a 13th-century bandit called Temujin, or, as we call him, Genghis Khan. The empire of the Golden Horde formed the Rus. In mind; you can see the consequences of the Tartar domination in Napoleon's campaigns, in the 19th century Great Game, in the foreign policy pursued by Russia today. The Western mind was formed by the distant memory of Genghis Khan. It isn't given to many men to change the course of history for centuries after their death - Napoleon, Martin Luther, Hitler - but Genghis Khan undoubtedly did, and the effects of his empire will be felt as long as Russia exists.

On the other hand, I concede that a Marks & Spencer sandwich makes a more cheerful advert on the telly.

ance of the Europe debate, found that Scots favoured staying in Europe by a majority of 23 per cent, compared to a majority of 9 per cent for the UK as a whole. The advent of the euro is an opportunity to strengthen Scotland's close trading links with other EU countries, free from currency fluctuations.

The auld alliance of Scotland and France had its comic aspect as well as its historic, turbulent one. At one point before the Act of Union, the English government was so odds with the French that it banned the drinking of claret. This delicious export continued in larger quantities into Leith, the port of Edinburgh, from where my Border constituents - or rather their ancestors - made a tidy profit by smuggling it across into England.

Today it would be difficult to find two European countries between whom goods go back and forth more than between England and Scotland, which is why I find calls for total independence and the break-up of the Union so absurd. To debate who would or could not qualify for Scottish citizenship seems a pointless and irrelevant ex-

ercise when the new parliament will be faced with more pressing problems of employment, housing, education, health and agriculture.

My own conversations with other heads of government from Europe and Africa persuade me that the very restoration of the Scottish Parliament next year will greatly enhance Scotland's profile in the world, to the tangible benefit of our trade and industry.

We do not need to imitate the Republic of Ireland. I mean no disrespect to them when I say that their global influence is limited to representation in 41 countries, compared with 153 for the UK. Nor will you find in Eire, Air Force bases to match Leuchars, Kinloss and Lossiemouth.

We should concentrate in the future in continuing to export the best of the Scottish ethos - thrift, hard work, innovation, sturdy egalitarianism, high-quality education, pioneering in medicine, Scottish football and rugby and the arts can play their part.

The task of the Scottish Parliament will be to provide focus and voice for that identity.



PODIUM

DAVID STEEL
From a lecture by the former Liberal Party leader to the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh

tiled roofs all over Fife and East Lothian and built up our woollen textile industry; similarly the Scandinavian trade routes left us with a commonality of dialect words such as "kirk", "tatties" and "scrive". Even today a teenage hitch-hiker in Europe will have greater success wearing a kilt than the universal jeans.

A Mori poll for the European Movement in 1996, at the height of Eurosceptic domin-

IT IS an old joke, which I use frequently, that there was no such thing as a British empire; it was a Scottish empire on to which the English attached themselves. Certainly in terms of missionaries, explorers and engineers, the Scottish impact was substantial. I live a few miles from the humble cottage of Dr Mungo Park of Selkirkshire, whose expeditions to the Niger opened up the western part of the African continent, whereas his more famous Lanarkshire successor, Dr David Livingstone, achieved the same for east and central Africa. It is a humbling experience to visit the tough-hewn memorials bearing the names of Scottish missionaries who died of malaria on the shores of Lake Malawi in pursuit of bringing education, medicine and Christianity to the peoples of the region.

Twentieth-century African presidents such as Nyere of Tanzania and Kaunda of Zambia have paid repeated tributes to their Scottish influence. Lord Kelvin and James Watt turned the Clyde into the ship-building and engineering

capital of the world. The MacKinnon family operated the great British India shipping line. David Hume, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson provided an intellectual export from Scotland of an equally worldwide importance.

More than half the signers of the American Declaration of Independence were of recent Scots descent. Most of the Scots who arrived in Canada had been sharpened on the grindstone of hard lives in Scotland. Resilient and resourceful, they quickly established themselves at the forefront of Canadian society. Of course, Scotland had long been more closely linked to the European continent than was England. Historically the relationship between Scottish universities and those in Leiden and Bologna were real. The "Collège des Ecossais" in France in 1325 was the forerunner of our own universities.

There were our church links with Luther and Calvin, influencing not only John Knox. Our legal system was - and remains - the Roman-Dutch one, not that of English common law; trade with the Low Countries left Dutch red-

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Deadly cost of a degrading act

WE ARE now in the endgame, the final bankruptcy of Western policy towards Iraq, the very last throw of the dice. We fire 200 cruise missiles into Iraq and what do we expect? Is a chastened Saddam Hussein going to emerge from his hunker to explain to us how sorry he is? Will he tell us how much he wants those nice UN inspectors to return to Baghdad to find his "weapons of mass destruction"? Is that what we think? Is that what the Anglo-American bombardment is all about? And if so, what happens afterwards? What happens when the missile attacks end - just before the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, because, of course, we really are very sensitive about Iraqi religious feelings - and Saddam Hussein tells us that the UN inspectors will never be allowed to return?

As the cruise missiles were launched, President Clinton announced that Saddam had "disarmed the [UN] inspectors", and Tony Blair - agonising about the lives of the "British forces" involved (all 14 pilots) - told us that "we act because we must". In so infantile a manner did we go to war on Wednesday night. No policies. No perspective. Not the slightest hint as to what happens after the bombardment ends. With no UN inspectors back in Iraq, what are we going to do? Declare eternal war against Iraq?

We are "punishing" Saddam - or so Mr Blair would have us believe. And all the old clichés are being trotted out. In 1985, just before he bombed them, Ronald Reagan told the Libyans that the United States had "no quarrel with the Libyan people". In 1991, just before he bombed them, George Bush told the Iraqis that he had "no quarrel with the Iraqi people". And now we have Tony Blair - as he bombs them - telling Iraqis that yes, he has "no quarrel with the Iraqi people".

Is there a computer that churns out this stuff? Is there a cliche department at Downing Street which also provides Robin Cook with the tired phrase of the American Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, about how Saddam used gas "against his own people"?

For little did we care when he did use that gas against the Kurds of Halabja - because, at the time, those Kurds were allied to Iran and we, the West, were supporting Saddam's invasion of Iran.

The lack of any sane long-term policy towards Iraq is the giveaway. Our patience - according to Clinton and Blair - is exhausted. Saddam cannot be trusted to keep his word (they've just realised). And so Saddam's ability to "threaten his neighbours" - neighbours who don't in fact want us to bomb Iraq - has to be "degraded". That word "degraded" is a military term, first used by General Schwarzkopf and his boys in the 1991 Gulf war. It is now part of the vocabulary of the weak. Saddam's weapons of mass destruction have to be "degraded". Our own dear Mr Cook was



ROBERT FISK
If the inspectors couldn't find the weapons, how come we know where to fire the cruise missiles?

at it again yesterday, informing us of the need to "degrade" Saddam's military capability.

How? The UN weapons inspectors - led for most of the time by Scott Ritter (the man who has admitted he kept flying to Israel to liaise with Israeli military intelligence), could not find out where Saddam's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons were hidden. They had been harassed by Iraq's intelligence thugs, and prevented from doing their work. Now we are bombing the weapons facilities which the inspectors could not find.

Or are we? For there is a very serious question that is not being asked: if the inspectors couldn't find the weapons, how come we know where to fire the cruise missiles?

And all the while, we continue to impose genocidal sanctions on Iraq, sanctions that are killing innocent Iraqis and - by the admission of Mr Cook and Mrs Albright - not harming Saddam at all. Mrs Albright rages at Saddam's ability to go on building palaces, and Mr Cook is obsessed with a report of the regime's purchase of liposuction equipment which, if true, merely proves that sanctions are a total failure.

Mr Cook prattles on about how Iraq can sell more than \$10bn (£6bn) of oil a year to pay for food, medicine and other humanitarian goods. But since more than 30 per cent of these oil revenues are diverted to the UN compensation fund and UN expenses in Iraq, his statement is totally untrue.

Dennis Halliday, the man who ran the UN oil-for-food programme in Baghdad, until he realised that thousands of Iraqi children were dying every month because of sanctions, resigned his post with the declaration that "we are in the process of destroying an entire society... it is illegal and immoral." So either Mr Halliday is a pathological liar - which I do not believe - or Mr Cook has a serious problem with the truth - which I do believe.

Now we are bombing the people who are suffering under our sanctions. Not to mention the small matter of the explosion of child cancer in southern Iraq, most probably as a result of the Allied use of depleted uranium shells during the 1991 war. Gulf war veterans may be afflicted with the same sickness, although

the British Government refuses to contemplate the possibility. And what, in this latest strike, are some of our warheads made of? Depleted uranium, of course.

Maybe there really is a plan afoot for a coup d'état, though hopefully more ambitious than our call to the Iraqi people to rise up against their dictator in 1991, when they were abandoned by the Allies they thought would speed to their rescue. Mr Clinton says he wants a democracy in Iraq - as fanciful a suggestion as any made recently. He is demanding an Iraqi government that "represents its people" and "respects" its citizens. Not single Arab regime - especially not Washington's friends in Saudi Arabia - offers such luxuries to its people. We are supposed to believe, it seems, that Washington and London are terribly keen to favour the Iraqi people with a fully fledged democracy. In reality, what we want in Iraq is another bullying dictator - but one who will do as he is told, invade the countries we wish to see invaded (Iran), and respect the integrity of those countries we do not wish to see invaded (Kuwait).

Yet no questions are being asked, no lies uncovered. Ritter, the Marine Corps inspector who worked with Israeli intelligence, claimed that Richard Butler - the man whose report triggered this week's new war - was aware of his visits to Israel. Is that true? Has anyone asked Mr Butler? He may well have avoided such contacts - but it would be nice to have an answer.

So what to do with Saddam? Well, first, we could abandon the wicked sanctions regime against Iraq. We have taken enough innocent lives. We have killed enough children. Then we could back the real supporters of democracy in Iraq - not the ghouls and spooks who make up the so-called Iraqi National Congress, but the genuine dissidents who gathered in Beirut in 1991 to demand freedom for their country, but were swiftly ignored by the Americans once it became clear that they didn't want a pro-Western强man to lead them.

And we could stop believing in Washington. Vice-President Al Gore told Americans yesterday that it was a time for "national resolve and unity". You might have thought that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor, or that General MacArthur had just abandoned Batan. When President Clinton faced the worst of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, he bombed Afghanistan and Sudan. Faced with impeachment, he now bombs Iraq. How far can a coincidence go?

This week, two Christian armies - America's and Britain's - went to war with a Muslim nation, Iraq. With no goals, but with an army of plotters, they have abandoned the UN's weapons control system; closed the door on arms inspections, and opened the door to an unlimited military offensive against Iraq. And nobody has asked the obvious question: what happens next?



Iraqi women and children amid the wreckage left by Wednesday night's bombing raids

Reuters

RIGHT OF REPLY

ERNEST REA



The head of BBC Religion denies that the corporation has neglected its Christmas duty

I MUST respond to the Bishop of St Albans' complaint about the lack of provision of an act of worship by the BBC on Christmas Day.

Religious programming is at the heart of the BBC's Christmas offering, with BBC Religion providing 82 programmes, 51 hours of broadcasting over Advent and Christmas. In fact the BBC is the only national broadcaster to provide (on BBC Radio 4) a live church service on Christmas morning.

We are also broadcasting Carols from King's College, Cambridge, on TV and radio on Christmas Eve, along with the traditional Watchnight Service from St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh on BBC1.

On Christmas Day, BBC1 offers Celebrate Christmas, a broad-appeal, religious-based programme. This aims to make the Christmas message accessible to the many viewers who do not attend church but who wish to celebrate this important occasion.

It is a sad fact of life that church attendance is falling and our research indicates there is a limited demand for televised church services, which do not attract large numbers of viewers.

Programmes like Songs of Praise, however, achieve audiences of millions through a successful mix of old and new hymns, interviews and celebrity contributions. We have chosen to follow this formula for BBC1 on Christmas Day for the past six years, and viewers this year are promised a moving celebration of the story of Christ's birth through beautiful pictures and glorious music. Those who want a traditional service can listen to our radio broadcast from the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool.

The quality and range of BBC religious broadcasting is unmatched and aims to meet the needs of all.

A stylist in search of style



FRIDAY BOOK

THE WORLD IS THE HOME OF LOVE AND DEATH
BY HAROLD BRODKEY. FOURTH ESTATE, £12.99

AT THE end of *This Wild Darkness*, an account of his battle with Aids, Harold Brodkey wrote that "if I had to give up what I've written in order to be clear of this disease, I wouldn't do it". Whether this represents a declaration of faith in the value of literature or simply in his own identity as a writer is unclear. Either way, Brodkey affirmed the role of the artist in a way that has largely passed from fashion.

He was born in Illinois in 1930. Two years later, his mother died and he became withdrawn and mute, emerging from a long period of silence as a prodigy. He was brought up in Missouri and educated at Harvard before moving to New York in 1953. His early stories appeared in *The New Yorker*, with which he enjoyed a lifelong association, and his first collection was published in 1957. For the next three decades, he was more famous for what he had not written than for what he had. He tantalised readers with the work-in-progress that became *The Runaway Soul*, his attempt at the Great American Novel.

The 29 years of the book's composition made him the reported inspiration for Victor Frankl in

Jay McInerney's novel, *Brightness Falls*, whose "reputation grew with each book he failed to publish". When it finally appeared in 1990, it proved a huge disappointment, self-conscious in style and self-obsessed in subject. One critic opined that "Death would have been a smarter career move". Neither his second, shorter novel, *Profane Friendship*, nor *This Wild Darkness* succeeded in silencing the doubters. So a great deal hangs on this final return to the form in which his reputation was made.

With the single exception of "What I Do For Money", which concerns a redundant executive suffering from a brain tumour, all 11 stories in this posthumous collection involve characters

and conflicts from *The Runaway Soul* - so much so that they start to seem like offcuts from that novel. In two of them, "Spring Fugue" and "Religion", the narrator is not named but, in both, he is recognisable as Wiley, Brodkey's fictional alter-ego, the mid-Western Jewish boy turned New York writer.

In the other stories, the links are more direct as Wiley is re-united with his mismatched adoptive parents, Lila and SL, his disturbed elder sister, Nonie, and his WASP girlfriend, Ora. The order is loosely chronological, starting with the infant Wiley's observation of the battle of wills that passes for affection between his mother and a woman friend ("The Bullies"), continuing through the tortured relationships suffered by the Silenowicz family and ending with two stories ("Dumbness is Everything" and "A Guest in the Universe") that show the older Wiley as a party animal.

The key to Brodkey's fictional world is found in *This Wild Darkness*, where he asserts that "I think of childhood and adolescence as sexual, as filled with the sexual intrusion of others". This is a world where no one respects anyone's boundaries and people are subject to constant assaults, emotional and physical. Adults use sexuality as a means of power over both themselves and their children. There is no innocence in Wiley's upbringing. Lila flirts with him as she washes him ("Do you love me? I'm a charmer"); Uncle Simon gropes him while assessing his muscular development; and the dying SL propositions him more directly, kissing the 14-year-old boy on the lips and following him into the lavatory ("You don't know the meaning of co-operate").

The explanation for the vast gulf between Brodkey's ambition and achievement can be discovered in the final story, set among Manhattan's "Upper Bohemians", where he writes that "Proust, in this set, was supposedly the best novelist ever". That pre-eminence



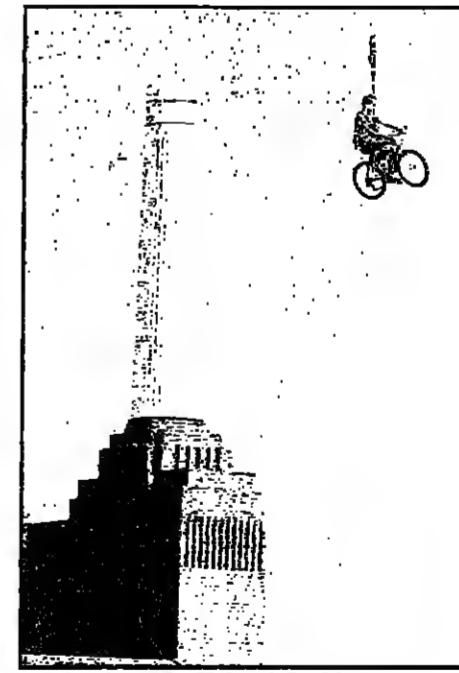
Harold Brodkey in 1991 Nicholas Turpin

may be justified, but the master's influence on Brodkey was disastrous. While Proust's genius lies in the balance he maintains between the interior and exterior life, Brodkey destroys that balance in favour of the former. His monomania is monumental. His reflection on Ora that "I never liked the way she kissed unless I directed her" seems indicative of his feelings towards the world. He does not appear to write in order to share experience so much as to own it.

This is most apparent in his style, where the attempt to put consciousness into words founders as the words overwhelm consciousness. However worthy the endless worrying at detail may be, the reader begins to wish that Brodkey would not agonise so laboriously in public but settle for an affective beforehand. His model may be French, but he resembles less an American Proust than a literary equivalent of the Pompidou Centre, highlighting those elements that other writers keep out of sight.

MICHAEL ARDITTI

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FRIDAY POEM

VIRUS ***
BY JACKIE KAY

No that Am saying Am no grateful.
Am ayte grateful tae ma hosts,
awratime, and if by ony chance
ma host the rat sniffs it,
A kin a ways switch tack.
Big man wee wuman, wean:
it's awrasame tae me.
Don't get me wrang,
Am no aw that choosy,
as lang as the flesh
is guid and juicy.
One hit and Am in,

one bite and they're mine
in the neck, the groin.
Whit! Ma success rate
is naebody's busness.
Wey ma canny disguise
A make sure human hosts
drap like flies.
Bubo! It's all go.
O sweet Christ.
Sweet blood bodies.
Somebody's dochter. Somebody's Maw.

Our poems until 8 January come from the 10 volumes shortlisted
for this year's TS Eliot Prize, to be announced on 11 January.
Jackie Kay's 'Off Colour' is published by Bloodaxe (£6.95)

Pio Nock

THE OLD cliché of the broken-hearted clown became reality for Pio Nock in May when his wife of 50 years, Alexandra, died. But the show went on, and, even at the age of 77, Nock remained a star and continued to perform.

He died performing before a packed audience at a winter circus in Dortmund, Germany. Towards the end of his number, he fell from his chair into the sawdust and was taken to hospital, where the doctors were unable to resuscitate him. Even as they tried to do so, his granddaughter Nina Cortes continued the performance, hiding her own emotions as she carried out a high-wire act her grandmother had taught her. It was the opening night of the Christmas season and the public could not be disappointed.

Nock came from Switzerland, a country that has created many of the finest clowns, including the Chicks, Pic, Dimitri, Andre, Erni Steinberger, the cabaretist who made a sensational transition into the circus ring, and the television stars Duo Fischbach, as well as the greatest clown of all, Grock (Adrien Wetach, 1880-1959), who retired from the ring at the age of 74. Nock, however, could not bring himself to retire from the life into which he was born.

Pio Nock could trace his circus heritage back to 1770, when the dynasty was founded by Jakob Nock. Pio was born into the sixth generation, in Berne in 1921, the second son of Julio Pius and Amanda Nock. His brothers and sisters, Charles, Anneliese, Edith, Lotte, Erika, Eugen and Elizabeth, all became circus performers. Eugen, Charles and Elizabeth starred in London in 1953 at Tom Arnold's Harringay Arena Circus, with their death-defying exploits at the top of three 70ft-high swaying poles, before going to America, where they established new branches of the Nock family.

The basis of the Nock dynasty's performing artistry lay in their early exploits as itinerant highwire walkers. They gave al fresco open-air displays in the streets and market places of Switzerland, and the tradition of Nock wire-walkers has per-

sisted to the present. As soon as Pio could walk, he began his training. In 1929, his mother and father founded their own travelling show, Arena Plus Nock, which gave open-air performances, in which all the children eventually took part. Pio's grandmother, Alexandra Josefina Strohschneider was still dancing on the high wire at the age of 74.

In 1946, in Lucerne, Nock married Alexandra Bühlmann, a member of another Swiss circus family, and as Pio's youngest sister Erika married Alexandra's brother, Moritz Bühlmann, it was natural for Nock to graduate to the Bühlmanns' family show, Circus Pilatus. Moritz

Nock clowned on the high wire while below him seven hungry lions waited for their prey to fall into the cage

Bühlmann was the family daredevil performer, the projectile in the human cannonball act and the show's lion trainer. It was not long before Nock and Bühlmann had devised a new thrill act, with Nock clowning on the high wire while below him sat seven hungry lions waiting for their prey to fall into the cage. His surefootedness, despite his crazy antics, ensured that he never became part of their diet.

In 1948, in addition to training horses and ponies, Nock turned his talents to clowning full-time, creating a lovable character who was first partnered by the white-face clown Angelo and then by Max van Embden, Grock's former partner. He created a classical slapstick and musical clowning act which stood the test of time, and which he performed around the world for 50 years.

After the Circus Pilatus closed, Nock and his growing family travelled extensively with leading circuses in Portugal, Spain and France, to Israel and Turkey, Holland, Germany and many other countries, topping the bill wherever he went.

For the Christmas season of 1960/61, he came to England for the first time, appearing in the King's Hall, Manchester, with the Belle Vue International Circus in the clown act and, with his wife, in the comedy highwire number performed above Bühlmann's lions.

Later he took his son-in-law, Mario Cortes, as his white-face clown and faire-volant, and members of his family joined him in the highwire act, in which he appeared above the swimming pool in Bournemouth at George Baline's Aqua Show. Three generations of Nocks appeared in Mary Chipperfield's Circus at Pleasureland, Southport, for the summer season of 1983, Pio Nock's last appearance in England.

In the 1960s Nock worked in Germany with the Circus Paula Busch and went on to join Germany's huge Circus Franz Althoff. He played a major role in the epic American circus film, *The Magnificent Showman*, or *Circus World* as it was known outside Britain. Made by Samuel Bronston in 1964, it starred John Wayne, Claudia Cardinale, Rita Hayworth and Lloyd Nolan with Nock and Max van Embden in their clown acts.

Nock continued to enjoy enormous success in his native land, and was featured by the renowned Swiss National Circus Knie on several occasions. He was in their special programme for Expo 64 in Lansen and again in Knie's own 50th jubilee programme in 1968.

He appeared in America for seven years with "The Greatest Show on Earth", the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. During this time, Nock sustained a fall from 10 metres up on the wire. He fell directly into the wild animal cage containing a dozen or more fierce lions and lionesses and it was only thanks to the quick actions of the trainer Wolfgang Holzmaier,

who herded them swiftly out of the cage and back to their living quarters, that his life was saved. Although he established a second home in Sarasota, Florida, close to the winter home of the Ringling show, he never appeared in America again.

Pio NOCK le plus grand comique SUISSE

Sur la PISTE de l'EXPLOIT RIRE et SUSPENS!

Sur un fil tendu à 10m au dessus de la cage aux fauves...

SABINE

CIRQUE RANCY

A 1966 poster depicting Nock performing his high-wire act

Pius "Pio" Nock, clown and high-wire performer: born Berne, Switzerland 10 November 1921; married 1946 Alexandra Bühlmann (died 1998; two sons, one daughter); died Dortmund, Germany 4 December 1998.

D. NEVILLE

During this time he published extensively on medieval and Renaissance literature, and especially on Shakespeare. For the Early English Text Society he edited, from the unique manuscript in the Folger Shakespeare Library, *The Macro Plays* (1969), the most important extant group of medieval morality plays.

As a Shakespearean he produced a commentary on King Lear, popular editions of *Othello*, *Twelfth Night*, and *Richard III*, and finally in 1980, his magisterial *Measure for Measure* in the New Variorum Shakespeare edition, published by the Modern Language Association. He published articles in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, and was a regular contributing correspondent to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Eccles served as president of the Madison Literary Club and was active in the Association of University Professors of English, the Modern Language Association of America, and the International Association of University Professors of English. He was a Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies, a Guggenheim Fellow, an International Research Fellow at the Huntington Library, and in 1955-56 a Fulbright Lecturer in the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon.

All who knew Mark Eccles were awed by his vast erudition and complete recall of every detail of it. Though somewhat reserved in manner and austere in prose style, he was a warm friend, host, colleague, and mentor, and a devoted husband and father who wrote weekly to his children and enjoyed yearly reunions with all of them. He took great pride in sharing his knowledge and love of literature with several generations of students.

CONRAD SORDINO
Mark Eccles, Shakespeare scholar: born Oxford, Ohio 13 July 1905; married; died Madison, Wisconsin 9 November 1998.

Lt Ronald Seddon



Seddon (right) with Jimmy Thomas in 1943, the day after their boats sank the E-boat S96

RONALD SEDDON was very much a product of the times into which he was born in 1917. He was just old enough to benefit from Liverpool's enlightened secondary school post-war programme and fortunate that his family lived where they did, as this brought him under the tutelage of the city's finest headmaster, R.E. Bailey, at Quarry Bank School.

He was a younger schoolfriend of my brother, who was 10 years older than me, and I remember that Seddon captained his House swimming team, played cricket for the School Second XI and made a sufficient name for himself at soccer in the First to turn out for Liverpool's reserves.

He left immediately after gaining his School Certificate, seeking work as the Depression settled on the area. After leaving school he started to make a career at the Liverpool Playhouse, then approaching the height of its standing in the repertory world. He was something of an idol to those still at school.

Seddon typified the generation which sooner or later was absorbed into the Second World War better-educated than their parents in the First and much more sensibly mobilised. The Navy, anxious not to have a manpower surplus to requirements when the war ended – as they had had in 1919 – recruited almost all the men it needed into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, to the chagrin of

some of that body's pre-war members. Seddon was clearly a potential officer, and spent the minimum time on the lower deck, specialising as a wireless telegraphist before being commissioned in 1942.

Thereafter he served out the war in Coastal Forces where the relationship between the RN and the

RNVR was particularly close. He soon graduated from First Lieutenant of a Harbour Defence Launch to command of the seagoing Motor Launch 145, based at Lowestoft for the defence of East Coast convoys. In company with ML 150 she sank the German E-boat S96 in September 1943; Seddon picked

trying not to look too pusser; too much like the RN, they operated in Fairmile "Dog" boats. These were modified for the high-speed transport of individuals such as Special Operations Executive (SOE) and Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) agents, escaping aircrash and other "Joey's" (passengers) whose names were seldom known and never mentioned.

Seddon's first trip, in the misnamed Motor Torpedo Boat 718 which now lacked torpedo tubes, was a joint operation in April 1944 with MGB 502 – which still had her guns

– when six agents and their baggage were safely and accurately landed on the Brittany coast. At the same time 10 individuals were retrieved. Three German patrol vessels interfered with their return until crafty signalling misled them into friendly silence.

In May, MTB 718 carried out the unit's first Norwegian mission, collecting two SIS agents and their native hosts; fortunately no compensation was given for the shortness of the nights. The next few missions were again to France; on one, the First Lieutenant and two seamen were

left behind because of a dragging anchor and a duff radio set, but they made their way home safely within the month.

That September Seddon successfully landed ammunition and stores west of Lorient on the Brit-

tany coast for the Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur (FFI), but with questionable wisdom and in clear breach of security succumbed to a request for fire support in a skirmish. He got an unexpectedly bloody nose and was fortunate in extricating his damaged boat from German defence forces. He was even more fortunate that his squadron Commanding Officer was on board; the latter's appreciation of the Nelson touch made the point and pre-empted further comment.

Seddon made five more Scandinavian trips, all hairy but the last the worst: he was lucky as well as skilled in February 1945 when despite the advice of native pilots he went into the Skagerrak to land agents and supplies for which he was awarded the DSC. His school Roll of Honour also credited him with a little-known Croix de Guerre, not surprisingly in view of his many clandestine trips to the enemy occupied coasts of France.

After the war he married and worked at his father-in-law's toy-making firm, eventually taking over the running of it.

A. B. SAINSBURY

RONALD FRANKLIN SEDDON, naval officer: born Liverpool 14 December 1917; married 1946 Luca Kaplan (died 1969; two sons, one daughter); died London 18 October 1998.

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Mark
Cecles

Butch McDade

IN THE SEVENTIES, the rootsy sound and humorous songwriting of the Amazing Rhythm Aces earned them unlikely hits with "Third Rate Romance", "Amazing Grace (Used to Be Her Favorite Song)" and "The End is Not in Sight (The Cowboy Tune)", the latter a 1977 Grammy-winner for best country vocal performance by a duo or group.

"Butch" McDade, the group's drummer and second vocalist, was born in 1946 and was educated at the Marion Military Institute and the University of Tennessee. He decided to become a drummer after hearing a James Brown record, and made his debut while in the second grade, with a rhythm band.

By 1972, he had met the bass-player Jeff "Stuck" Davis and Russell Smith, a vocalist and guitarist. They got a gig backing the singer-songwriter Jesse Winchester, who took a liking to two of Smith's compositions, "Third Rate Romance" and "The End is Not in Sight" and decided to include them on his album *Learn to Love It* (1974).

Winchester, in order to dodge his US draft, settled in Canada, and so touring opportunities were limited. McDade and Davis soon moved back to Nashville and hooked up again with Russell Smith who brought along a keyboard player, Billy Earheart III. With Barry Burton (guitar, mandolin) and James Hooker (keyboards), they became the Amazing Rhythm Aces.

Their fine musicianship and mix of country, rock, gospel and rhythm 'n' blues soon attracted record company interest and they signed to ABC Records. In 1975, they released their debut album, *Stacked Deck*. The smooth single "Third Rate Romance" attracted massive airplay and rose up the country charts before crossing over to the pop market and becoming a Top Fifteen hit.

The sextet never again equalled that success, although their second single, "Amazing Grace (Used to Be Her Favorite Song)", reached the country Top Ten. After five further albums (*Toucan Do It Too*, *Burning the Ballroom Down*, *The Amazing Rhythm Aces and How the Hell Do You Spell Rhythm?*), the group – often described as too rock for country and too country for rock – broke up in 1980.

"Back then, you couldn't make an album on your own, because of the technology. You had to have a big, hungry machine behind it because it was so expensive. Then you'd go out on the road and work yourself to death, and every dime you made went to pay back the machine. That's the main reason we split up; we were killing ourselves out there and not even earning a living," recalls Russell Smith.

Butch McDade kept busy, touring or recording with the likes of Leon Russell, Lannie Mack, Roy Clark and Tanya Tucker, and also running a restaurant and working as a sports writer for his local paper.

By the mid-Nineties, fans were clam-



McDade (back row, second from left) in 1979 with the Amazing Rhythm Aces

Gems/Redfens

ouring to get Amazing Rhythm Aces favourites on compact disc. Since their back catalogue was tied up in legal wranglings, the band decided to cut new versions of "Third Rate Romance", "King of the Cowboys" and McDade's poignant composition "Last Letter Home". The resulting collection, issued in 1994 on their own Breaker label and entitled *Ride Again*, sold so well in the US, Australia and New Zealand that the group began touring again.

Last year, they recorded *Out of the*

Blue, an album of new material, including two excellent songs by McDade, "Oh, Lucky Me" and "Get Down", on which he sang lead. By the time the band took to the road earlier this year, McDade had been diagnosed with bladder cancer and did not join them on their first European trip. They received rave reviews for concerts in Switzerland, Ireland and Britain (at the Borderline, in London). Russell Smith said: "There was never a thought of naming a full-time replacement. People have always

said there's something other than the musical nuts and bolts that makes the Aces special, and a whole lot of that was due to him. Every time he hit a drum, it sounded like he meant it."

PIERRE PERRONE

Dovid' Hugh ("Butch") McDade, drummer, singer, songwriter; born Clarksdale, Missouri, 24 February 1946; twice married (one son, one daughter); died Maryville, Tennessee 29 November 1998.

GAZETTE

BIRTHS,
MARRIAGES
& DEATHS

BIRTHS

CLARKE: Tiny and Megan are pleased to announce the safe arrival on 13 December of Elias Edward, brother for Freya and Iris.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, fuctions, forthcoming marriages, Marriages), which must be submitted in writing, are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Always include a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 1st Battalion The Duke of Wellington's Regiment mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

BIRTHDAYS

Mr Harold Best MP, 59; Field Marshal Lord Bramall, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London, 75; Miss Frances Crook, director, Howard League for Penal Reform, 46; Mr Jules Dassin, film director, 86; Lt Col Ian Fraser VC, 78; Mr Christopher Fry, playwright, 91; Pamela, Lady Harlech, journalist and producer, 64; Professor Michael Harrison, Vice-Chancellor, University of Wolverhampton, 57; Miss Rosemary Leach, actress, 63; Mr Romeo LeBlanc, Governor General of Canada, 71; Lord Loftus, house of Pontefract, former MP, 73; Lord MacLean, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 60; Lord Mervyn Rees, former Home Secretary, 78; Mr Muhammed Ali, boxer, 55; Mr John Mint, former chairman, William Simonds, 72; Mr Albert Pacey, director-general, National Criminal Intelligence Service, 60; Miss Annette Page, ballerina, 66; Dr Joyce Reynolds, historian, 80; Mr Keith Richards, guitarist with the Rolling Stones, 55; Lord Robens of Woldingham, former chairman, Coal Board and Vickers, 88; The Earl of Shrewsbury, former joint Deputy Chairman, Britannia Building Society, 46; Mr Steven Spielberg, film producer and director, 51; Sir Christopher Stuart-White, High Court judge, 65; Mr Dick Thimmon, ambassador to the Dominican Republic, 56; Miss Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, tennis player, 27; Mr Joe Wade, former trade union leader, 79; The Right Rev Roy Williamson, Bishop of Southwark, 66.

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Ludolf Backhuysen, painter, 1631; Charles Wesley, hymn-writer of "Jesus, Lover of My Soul", 1707; Joseph Grimaldi, clown, 1779; Viktor Kazysnik, composer, 1812; Dr William Moon, inventor of "blind" alphabet, 1818; Abraham Viktor Rydberg, philosopher and poet, 1828; Sir Joseph John Thomson, physicist, 1856; Francis Thompson, poet, 1859; Edward Alexander MacDowell, composer and pianist, 1860; Saki (Hector Hugh Munro), short-story writer, 1870; Paul Klee, abstract painter, 1879; Dame Gladys Cooper, actress, 1888; Cuthbert Orde, painter, 1888; Edwin Howard Armstrong, engineer and inventor of FM radio, 1890; Willy Brandt (Herbert Ernst Karl Frahm), former West German Chancellor, 1913; Betty (Elizabeth Ruth) Grable, actress, 1916.

Deaths: Abu Mohammed al-Ghazali, Islamic theologian, 1111; Robert Nanteuil, engraver, 1678; Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff, political writer, 1692; Antonio Stradivari, violin maker, 1737; Johanna Gottfried von Herder, theologian and philosopher, 1803; Dr Alexander Adam, classic scholar and teacher, 1809; Thomas Dunham Whitaker, topographer, 1821; Jean-Baptiste Pierre-Antoine Monnet, Chevalier de Lamarck, zoologist, 1829; Marie Louise, archduchess of Parma, empress, 1847; Samuel Rogers, poet and banker, 1855; Louis Moreau Gottschalk, composer, 1859; Philipp Veit, painter, 1877; George Edmund Street, architect, 1881; Sir Richard Owen, palaeontologist, 1892.

Sir John William Alcock, aviator, killed in an air crash 1919; Horatio Parker, composer, 1919; Sir William Hams Thornycroft, sculptor, 1925; Hugo Henkel, chemist, 1952; Dorothy Leigh Sayers, detective story writer, 1957; Robert Tyre (Bobby) Jones, champion golfer, 1971; Alexei Nikolayevich Kosygin, Russian leader, 1980; Ben Travers, writer of farces, 1980; Marguerite Yourcenar (Marguerite de Crayencour), historical novelist, 1987; Sam Wanamaker (Samuel Watenmaker), actor, director and producer, 1993.

On this day: the Scots were defeated at the Battle of Clifton Moor, 1745; New Jersey became the third of the United States, 1787; Thomas Paine, who had fled to France, was tried in his absence for his publication of *The Rights of Man*, 1792; the first stones of the piers of Blackfriars Railway Bridge, London, were laid, 1865; under the 13th Amendment, slavery was abolished in the United States, 1865; the underground railway from Stockwell to the City of London was opened, 1890; Frederick, Lord Lugard occupied Uganda for the British East Africa Company, 1890; a treaty between the US and Panama placed the Canal under US control for an annual rent, 1903; the US Congress prohibited the entry of illiterate immigrants, 1912; Edward Benes succeeded Tomas Masaryk as president of Czechoslovakia, 1935; the French newspaper *Le Monde* was issued for the first time, 1944; after discussion in the House of Lords, the death penalty for murder was abolished, 1959.

United Synagogues: 0181-343 8888; Federation of Synagogues: 0181-202 2263; Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-380 1652; Reform Synagogues of Great Britain: 0181-349 4731; Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-288 2573; New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-328 1026.

SYNAGOGUE SERVICES

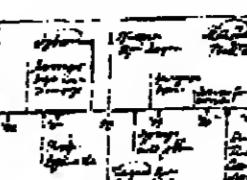
Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 3.37pm.

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A BUSY autumn, so now a mosh in New York and visits to the Society Library. Back in 1925, *American Speech* called it "a gem of a word", but to say as much now raises eyebrows, for it has connotations of gambling and drug-dealing absent from the OED, which dwells upon bunting off to pick blackberries.

WORDS
CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE
mosh, v. and n.
It posits a derivation from the Old French for skulking, and, naturally, finds examples of the unactivity in that paean

lassitude. *Three Men in a Boat*. Also absent from the OED, but which surfaces in Jonathan Green's admirable *Stage*, is *mosher's mile*, a Thirties expression for that barren stretch east of Piccadilly Circus to Leicester Square: more worthy of a place on street signs than the absurd "Theatreland" which nobody uses.



HISTORICAL NOTES

MICHAEL HICKEY

A traumatic attempt to free Constantinople

THE RECENT 80th anniversary of the Armistice drew attention, not unnaturally, to the immense casualties sustained on the Western Front, where the combatants were deadlocked for nearly three years. But in 1915 an attempt was made to untie the Gordian knot by forcing the Dardanelles, inserting an Anglo-French fleet into the Sea of Marmara, and using its guns to force Turkey out of the war, gain access to the hea

guered Russians via the Bosphorus, and collapse the Austro-Hungarian empire. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty in Asquith's Liberal Cabinet, was fervently in favour of this strategy of indirect approach. His professional head of the Royal Navy, the astonishing septuagenarian Jacky Fisher was decidedly not, resigning in high dudgeon in June 1915, by which time a purely naval attempt to overwhelm the Chanak defences had failed disastrously and an Allied expeditionary force under General Sir Ian Hamilton was stranded and wilting under ferocious Turkish opposition.

British participation at Gallipoli has tended to be marginalised by the performance of the Australian and New Zealand troops – the Anzacs – whose astonishing gallantry and endurance rightly gained the admiration of all who saw it. However, the British and French lost over 40,000 men between them.

Hamilton had been sent to the eastern Mediterranean by Kitchener, Asquith's improbable choice as War Minister, with hopelessly inadequate resources; all priorities were given to the Western Front. In August, three raw divisions of the so-called Kitchener Army were sent to Saint Sofia and this alone would have diverted Allied attention from the aim of

Michael Hickey is the author of 'Gallipoli'. John Murray, £15.99

No general immunity for advice to settle

FRIDAY LAW REPORT

18 DECEMBER 1998

Arthur J.S. Hall & Co (a firm) v Simons and other appellants

Court of Appeal (Lord Bingham, Lord Chief Justice, Lord Justice Morris and Lord Justice Waller) 14 December 1998

Scoun, Exeter for Mr Harris; Rupert Jackson QC, Norman Wright and Sten Mirechandani (Weightmans, Liverpool) for Simon and Bond Pearce, Exeter for Schofield Roberts & Hill.

Lord Bingham CJ said that the main features of the law in a case where a legal adviser sought to restrain further prosecution of proceedings against him by a plaintiff for whom he had acted in an earlier case, and who claimed that his negligence had led to an outcome less favourable than the plaintiff would have achieved but for the negligence, were as follows.

The first question was whether the plaintiff's claim represented an abusive collateral challenge to the earlier judgment of the court: if it did the claim would ordinarily be dismissed or struck out.

In deciding that question it was always necessary to consider the nature and effect of the earlier judgment, the reason for it and the complaint made about it.

KATE O'HANLON Barrister

the later proceedings, and any grounds relied on to justify the collateral challenge, if was found to be such. Where the later proceedings did constitute a collateral attack they might, and ordinarily would, be an abuse of the process unless the plaintiff could properly allege a breach of duty which either deprived him of a reasonable opportunity of appreciating that better terms were available whether on settlement or at a contested hearing, or placed him in the position of having to accept a settlement significantly less advantageous than he should have had.

A plaintiff seeking to mount a collateral challenge to an earlier judgment or order would be required to explain why steps had not been taken to set aside or challenge the judgment or order complained of in the original proceedings: it would never be enough that the plaintiff was suffering from post-settlement remorse.

Pending reconsideration of *Rondel v Worsley* 1997 3 All ER 993 and *Snif Ali v Sydney Mitchell & Co (a firm) (3rd party)* (1978) 3 All ER 1023 by the House of Lords, the ratio of those cases was binding on lower courts.

There could be no general rule that a lawyer was or was not immune from liability in advising a client to settle a case, and immunity did not depend on when or where such advice was given. All depended on the advice given, the reason for it and the complaint made about it.

KATE O'HANLON Barrister

Walking into a middle-class minefield

EVERYONE ELSE from the Staines Rambling Group had chunky walking boots with unbreakable inch-wide laces, military trousers tucked into thick green socks, and a backpack carrying water and a first aid box. So I felt like a kid arriving at PE without his kit, expecting the head rambler to make me do the whole walk in my underpants.

But while a part of me felt unprepared, another part thought: "We're only going round Richmond bloody Park." Maybe we should have taken flares and a crocodile gun and a machine for transmitting Morse code, in case we took a wrong turning by the tea bar and ended up in a swamp in Nepal.

So I couldn't help feeling embarrassed, as we strolled off like a team of Sherpas, at being overtaken by nine-year-olds on skateboards, and women in high heels going up the shop for some teabags.

The walk passed some fascinating points: deer herds, a view of Twickenham rugby ground, and a flock of parakeets who've bred after two escaped from a cage in nearby Putney. But after walking for an hour, we

passed a map that informed us we were a few hundred yards from where we'd started. We'd just gone round and round in a series of loops and not gone bloody anywhere. I felt so crestfallen. This must be how Patrick McGrohan felt in *The Prisoner*, with no one else

bothered that they were being so cruelly deceived. "But look," I pleaded, "over there's where we started. Can't you see what they're doing to us?"

Completing a walk from Reading, Oxford, or across the Pennines, or even the perimeter of Richmond Park, has an appeal; a smug satisfaction of conquering something or other. But where's the sense of achievement in having walked over there, and round a bit, and along and back again?

It may be that the indifference to where you're going is part of the attraction, as any need to think is taken care of by the leader, who walks the route beforehand, carefully mapping it and working out stopping points for tea-breaks and lunch. A register is taken at the start of the ramble. This would have been essential for a school trip, but probably not quite as

necessary with this group. There was never much likelihood of a Staines rambler slipping off for a fag and turning up three hours later riding an electric caddy they'd nicked from the golf course.

So you follow the leader – and this is the problem. It's too organised. The exciting part of walking is the uncertainty – taking a path that could go anywhere, or going round so many lanes you aren't certain of the way back. Leaders of rambles should encourage members to live a bit, saying: "The route is left. So let's recapture our youth and go RIGHT!"

Instead, the affair reeks of suburban sensibility. Including the most suburban trait of all: the newsletter packed with exclamation marks. For example: "then we retired to a local hostelry for some much-needed refreshments!"

"You learn a lot from the experienced walkers," someone told me. "One thing I've learned is how to get round the thorny problem of pub landlords not allowing you in with muddy boots. Now, you know the shower caps you get in hotel bathrooms.

MARK STEEL



ON LOCATION

But much of the conversation which did take place revolved around the process of rambling. I can understand discussing matters that arise from rambling: wonderful views, the shape of twigs, or the time someone got caned on a hip flask of tequila on the South Downs and had to call a cab. But this was talk of rambling itself: the best place to start in The Chilterns; how many loops on a new rucksack; and where we're rambling on Boxing Day.

Which may be why the most enthusiastic and passionate ramblers appeared to be Valerie and John, who led the Richmond ramble. For they were fascinated by geology, botany, the parakeets, and a path in which no trees had ever been planted, in order that it remained possible to see St Paul's Cathedral. And when we stopped for lunch, John had the All-Day Breakfast with an extra sausage, always a sign of a man who's full of life.

One of the charms of rambling is that you can wander in solitude, clearing your mind and contemplating your own thoughts. So I can see why it wouldn't be appreciated if a speed-freak turned up with a portable CD player and tried to get everyone to sing along to "Smack My Bitch Up".

For Richmond Park was the subject of one of the bitterest battles against the enclosures. The son of Sir Robert Walpole arranged for the gates to be shut, and the public to be excluded. On several occasions, the walls were torn down by demonstrators until a brewer called John Lewis, armed with a mass petition following a militant campaign, won a court action. Walpole junior was ordered to reopen the gates and place ladders by the walls. Then, with admirable cheek, the brewer took out a further court action, insisting that the rungs on the ladders were too far apart, and he was again.

The origins of modern-day rambling lay in the industrial working class, as workers sought refuge from the stifling atmosphere of the mills and factories. But landowners objected to grubby oiks on their property, and it took decades of campaigning and celebrated "mass trespasses" to establish the right to footpaths.

Now the modest aspirations of the modern rambler have put them in a similar camp to their 19th-century counterparts, as certain landowners, such as

Nicholas Van Hoogstraten in Sussex, are determined to prevent them. In Van Hoogstraten's case, a public footpath has run through part of his land for several decades, so he's illegally built a barn across it to stop ramblers, referring to them as "the scum of the Earth".

Only the most appalling creature could act in that way against the harmless, mostly retiring, and mostly retired, world of ramblers.

Could the resistance to these attacks lead to a split in the rambling fraternity between militant and moderate factions? Perhaps we'll soon be seeing news-flashes, in which we're told that a barn has been blown up, with responsibility being claimed by the Provisional wing of the East Sussex Ramblers' Association.

But my proposal is for a special ramble which starts in a stagnant pond, winds its way into Van Hoogstraten's living room, stops off for cream tea in his bedroom, and finishes with the splendid view from his kitchen? I'd remember my especially thick boots for that one! And I wouldn't bother to wrap them in a shower cap first!

The spook...

Continued from page 1
In the intelligence world, the slipperiness of language is the key to sustaining relationships.

The phrasing of Sedgemore's question included the word "agent", which Mr Lawson echoed, commenting that he was not an "agent, paid or unpaid, for MI6". His wife has said it is ludicrous to suggest that he is a "spy" (a word secret services only use to refer to the other side). The more probing question to ask anyone accused of being in bed with security services is: "What is the nature of your involvement, and have you received either payment or benefits in return?"

The Foreign Office took the unusual step of issuing a categorical statement that MI6 "would never recruit an editor". Again, we must ask what the words really mean. These people are the original spin doctors. To say that a service would not "recruit" someone is not the same as saying that they would not have an intelligence relationship with them.

Lawson will doubtless clarify all this of his own accord. But the more general question, raised by all cases of alleged involvement by journalists with the intelligence services, is how far it is acceptable to cultivate a relationship. Many journalists have got good stories – or been able to substantiate them – by talking to the security services. The conundrum is what to do when they ask for favours in return. Articles published in *The Spectator* about Bosnia, under the byline Kenneth Roberts, are now alleged to have been the work of an MI6 officer. Lawson denies knowledge of this.

Yet it was odd that a man headed as "working with UN forces in Bosnia", and with such a sharpened axe to grind against the direction of British media coverage of the Bosnian Serbs, should have been so reluctant to reveal his identity, or that Lawson would not have suspected secret service involvement.

There is rarely an excuse for false bylines. Readers have the right to expect that authors are who they say they are. But a certain playfulness surrounded the Lawson Spectator. At its best, it produced scoops like the revelation of Nicholas Ridley's post-prandial anti-German outburst. At its worst, it allowed journalists to settle scores anonymously, as when a piece under the byline Veronica Lodge defended the convicted fraudster Darius Guppy. It was in fact by foreign editor Anne Applebaum. It seemed an unnecessary device, simply to defend a friend.

Certainly, MI6 has been intent on courting the media to put across its own version of events. They did not favour continued involvement in the Bosnian crisis and were anxious that television news, in particular, was becoming too anti-Serb and thus encouraging politicians to support British engagement.

But the "squirrely" – as MI6 calls it – also had problems closer to home. Shocked by the threats of the renegade Tomlinson, the service's new boss, David Smedding, authorised in 1995 for the first time a limited release of information about the case, intended to counter Tomlinson's allegations.

Although the official line was (and remains) that neither MI6 nor its domestic counterpart, MI5, talk to the press. Spedding embarked on a round of amiable lunches with senior journalists, opening channels of communication.

This half-way house, in which MI6 uses the press to influence opinion while failing to openly acknowledge that they are doing so, raises some worrying questions about what we read and watch.

The young men and the sea

Killer waves are about to hit a secret bay near San Francisco. The surfing élite can't wait. By Richard Kelly Heft

As Grant Washburn drives along the coast, 30 miles south of San Francisco, he begins holding his breath. If he can hold on for two-and-a-half minutes or more he'll be happy – that's the amount of time he thinks he may need if he gets into trouble while surfing one of the most dangerous waves in the world.

He's heading for a patch of sea, and a huge lump of rock as Maverick by the world's small, tightly knit group of world-class surfers. There are no signs; you simply drive to the nearest place marked on the map – Half Moon Bay – and ask the locals for directions. At the moment the sea is calm but any day now the rugged isolattoo is likely to be broken by the 20ft-40ft swells that break off Maverick's every winter.

When the swell hits, 20 surfers – all of whom have surfed Maverick's before and specialise in big waves – will have 48 hours to get to Half Moon Bay to compete in the first Maverick's competition, which goes by the name of the Quicksilver Men Who Surf Mountains event.

What makes Maverick's so scary is not just the size of the waves, which can easily exceed a crest-to-trough measurement of 40ft-soft (about the height of a four-storey building), but the terrifying combination of wave conditions that is found only there.

Waves break more than a quarter of a mile from shore and are therefore thicker and far more powerful than those at most other high-wave spots. Westerly currents pull surfers to an assortment of nasty jagged rocks and house-sized boulders. Underwater there is an unpredictable reef – shallow in some parts, deep in others and dotted with archways, caves and crevasses. Then there's the water itself – an uninviting greenish-grey, and cold. Don't bother trying to surf it without a full-length wetsuit, a hood and rubber gloves.

And sharks? "They're definitely around," says Washburn, "but that's not even a worry out there. There are way too many other things to worry about. There are at least a half dozen nightmare possibilities before you even get around to sharks." Jamie Brisick, editor of the American magazine *Surfing*, agrees – "it's the antithesis of Surf City," he says. "It's grey, cold; the waves are intimidating. It's a bitch."

Despite being so close to San Francisco and the surf mecca Santa Cruz, which is 20 miles to the south, Maverick's was virtually unknown before 1991. Up to that time the only person to surf the Maverick's break was Jeff Clark, a local who for 15 years surfed there alone, unable to persuade anyone to join him.

"No one wanted to believe that this wave was for real," he says.

But after he had persuaded some Santa Cruz surfers in February 1990 – including Dave Schmidt, brother of the big-wave legend Richard Schmidt – word spread quickly. By the time the next big swell broke, there were 15 surfers in the water. A year later, the story broke in *Surfer* magazine and Clark's name was made.

"It was like finding a lost species of animal in downtown San Francisco," says Matt Warshaw, a former



The waves near Half Moon Bay have already killed one man. Even sailing out to watch the surfers is considered dangerous

David Ashdown

editor of *Surfer*. "I am baffled by the fact that the place could have gone undiscovered for so long."

What sealed Maverick's reputation, however, was the death in 1994 of Mark Foo, a big-wave rider who was surfing after taking an all-night flight from Hawaii. Foo drowned on a relatively innocuous-looking 18-ft wave. People who saw the fall itself thought nothing of it – it was just one more of a dozen falls that day. Two hours later, a fishing boat loaded with photographers spotted Foo's body with his broken board still attached by the leg rope.

To prevent a recurrence of such an incident, only surfers who have already surfed Maverick's are being invited to the contest. Australian Ross Clarke-Jones, 32, is one of two non-Americans invited to take part (there are no British competitors).

Clarke-Jones flew in to try Maverick's during a big swell last year. He was keenly aware of the danger because the all-night trip from Hawaii was exactly the trip Foo had done two years before.

"To be honest, I was very nervous because of that," says Clarke-Jones. "I was freezing. I had on a wetsuit, a hood and booties. It's difficult to

swim in that body armour. I didn't have gloves, so after a while I couldn't even feel my fingers."

ing Clark as a teenager on the break surfing an area so far out on the point that locals judged it unsurfable.

"The wave changed my life from the moment I saw it," says Clark.

Aged 41, he still heads for the water almost every time it breaks. While he is still a surfer, there is little doubt that Clark has also become a power broker. Quicksilver, which is putting up \$40,000 (£24,000) in prize money, including \$10,000 for first prize, signed up Clark as a sponsored surfer and contest director.

Some blame him for commercialising a surf spot that was previously known only to a few locals.

What makes the sea so scary is not just the size of the waves, which are the height of four-storey buildings, but the terrifying conditions – jagged rocks, boulders as big as houses, and sharks

Although, as Grant Washburn says: "Word was bound to get out. It's a little like thinking you could keep Everest a secret."

Privately, some say he acts as though he owns the wave. But there is little doubt that if he hadn't been out there it would still be undiscovered. "If he had died I don't think anyone would have surfed it – at least not this century," says 72-year-old Alex Matienzo, who surfed the area in the Sixties. Matienzo recalls seeing

shark. He has the stocky build of an athlete half his age and the brawny forearms of a bricklayer. His tanned face is offset by piercing blue eyes and paper-white teeth. His body is a mass of chunky, hard edges.

Surfing the point himself as a teenager was nothing more than a calculated risk, he says. "I came here for years and just watched the wave before I ever went out and tried to surf. I studied the ocean more than I've studied anything else."

He would regularly miss school to surf big swells throughout northern California during the winter. "My father's favourite saying was: 'Quit looking at those waves'"

While he is still a surfer, there is little doubt that Clark has also become a power broker. Quicksilver, which is putting up \$40,000 (£24,000) in prize money, including \$10,000 for first prize, signed up Clark as a sponsored surfer and contest director.

He's accustomed to the cold; while other surfers wear layers of warm clothes and winter jackets, he stands on the windy bluff wearing only a T-

shirt. He has the stocky build of an athlete half his age and the brawny forearms of a bricklayer. His tanned face is offset by piercing blue eyes and paper-white teeth. His body is a mass of chunky, hard edges.

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Virtual no one will be able to see the competition live except photographers, organisers and judges – or those willing to pay local fishermen to take them out to watch from the water. Indeed, viewing the surf is almost as difficult as riding it. A steep bluff faces the ride, but it has been worn away to dirt and a few tufts of grass. The top of the cliff is fenced off, blocking the path to an overhang where the waves can be seen. To get to a viewing-spot you have to lean over the fence, with the sheer cliff face and rocky stretch of beach 200ft below.

Authorities say that no one will be allowed at the top of the cliff during the contest.

The best viewpoint will probably be over the Internet, as the contest site (mavsurf.com) will be transmitting video within minutes of each heat.

Grant Washburn dreams about Maverick's. A film grip based in San Francisco, he's been obsessed with big waves since childhood. He has refused to leave the area during the entire winter season for fear of missing something.

"I can't even talk about it with my girlfriend," he says. "She doesn't want to know. I wouldn't go to her parents' place for Thanksgiving because we had a big swell come in."

He practices holding his breath – counting familiar landmarks on the drive to the beach to gauge the progress – preparing for his personal worst-case scenario, a three-wave hold-down. He's not that concerned, though. He's already been held under for two waves and found it wasn't so bad.

"I came up feeling I could have stayed down longer. I felt really exhilarated. It was almost as good as riding the wave," he says.

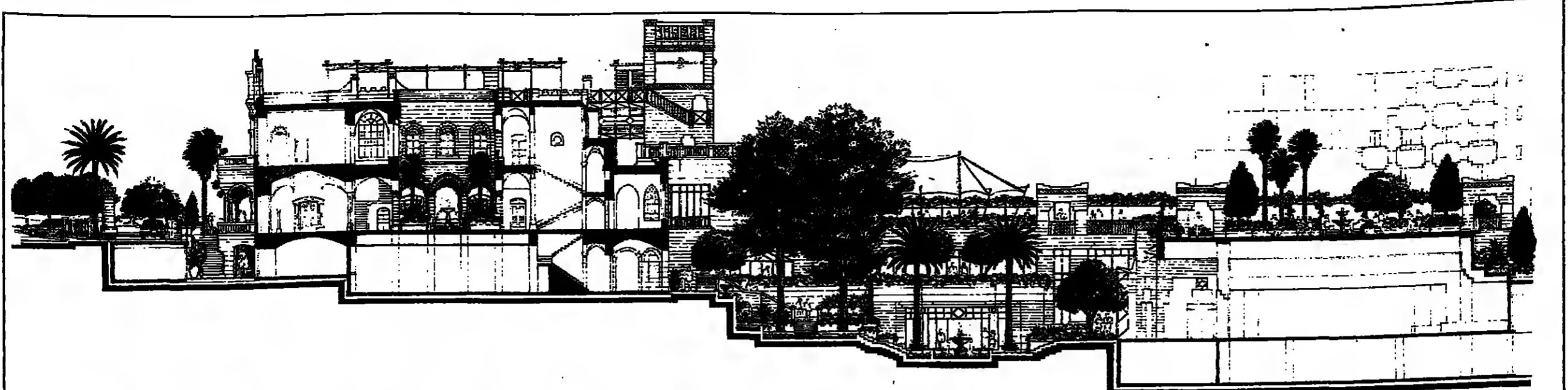
Christmas heralds a flop

FUNKY CRYSTAL

JAMES BROWN Funky Crystal

CAMP

HEAVY METAL has long been regarded as one of the subversive musical genres that is generally conservative but regularly rebels against the needs of adolescents. But if heavy metal's moral extrapolations are going to go by the board, then it's not before time. What saved both Magnet and Rob Zombi reaching the depths of their art was their ability to turn themselves up. While Monster Magnet's son prelude consisting of guitar figures and doomsday eruptions into Dave Wyndorf's known



Above: section through Jasser Palace and the main courtyard, below: section through the outdoor pool area and garden. Olive groves on the sloping site date back to the Nativity



Plenty of room at the inn

Millions of people will head for Bethlehem at the Millennium. And accommodation won't be a problem. By Nonie Niesewand

A former Hizbollah HQ at the birthplace of Christ will be occupied by tourists in king-sized suites, when the new Jasser Palace Hotel opens in time for the Millennium celebrations. Not many towns started their tourist drive with a rave review.

Bethlehem expects over five million tourists in the year 2000. In time-honoured tradition, they will celebrate three Christmases in Manger Square: on December 25, when Western Christians observe the Gregorian calendar; on January 5, when the Orthodox Christians look to the Julian calendar; and on January 19, when the Syrians get to open their presents.

In common with all the territory west of Jordan not occupied by Israel, Bethlehem was annexed to the Kingdom of Jordan after the Second World War. Cut off from the Mediterranean and with tourist access only via Amman, tourism took a nose-dive. Although the town is only a kilometre from Jerusalem, visitors needed a passport to move between the two, and cars with the blue Bethlehem number plate could not leave the city. All this will change next May, when Bethlehem will come under Palestinian rule. Tourism is top of the agenda.

Yasser Arafat heads Bethlehem 2000, an ambitious project which aims to transform the not-so-little town of Bethlehem. Its skyline – largely unchanged for centuries, with its towers and belfries, domes and spires, red-tiled monasteries and convents above steep, higgledy-piggledy streets – is about to get a facelift.

Markets will be torn down and rebuilt. Street elevations will be restored, and

Nativity Square is being pedestrianised and will acquire a new bus station.

And Bethlehem is to get a five star hotel. The Jasser Palace, with 250 bedrooms and king-sized suites, will open at the end of next year. Jordanian investors are bankrolling the \$25m project.

The Jasser Palace is being carefully crafted around an extraordinary family home, built in 1914 when Bethlehem was a quiet, mainly Arab-Christian, town within the Ottoman empire. A sugary cubed and cupolaed mini-Versailles, the Jasser Palace was built in pink and white Jerusalem stone, by a French architect, for a Christian trader Sulaiman. Jasser's name is still a flourish on the ornate gates.

Jasser was the Mayor of Bethlehem in the 1920s, before losing everything in the stockmarket crash of 1929, but his name is still synonymous with handouts be given to the poor and needy, and the fountain from which locals drew water. A phrase that apparently still has street cred in Bethlehem is: "Where's the next meal coming from? At the Jasser." This optimistic expression has been written into the brief for the team of international consultants, to remind them to go back to the Jasser Palace roots in reinventing the family house as a hotel, and to overlook its more troubled recent history.

It has been an HQ for Hizbollah before the PLO occupied it, a hospital and a school. Papering over its history has been avoided by the hotel design consultants, Hirsch Bedner Associates. Hirsch Bedner are the hotel *haute couturiers* who pioneered that luxurious, glam-chic LA look of the Beverly Hills Hotel in California, with stretch-limo sofas and capacious chairs, huge potted palms and great forests



Above: the imposing entrance on the road to Jerusalem, centre; the courtyard links old and new, right; the façade



on to the floor, stained-glass windows, brass Persian candelabras and mosaic-topped tables. Unlined colourful banners, rather than formal drapes, and big carved rosewood chests grace the vaulted rooms.

"I knew we had to tell a story in Bethlehem if we weren't just to be another five-star hotel. This one had to be different, to have a larger sense of its own importance," Alex Kravetz of HBA says. Rather than give the hotel a bland and international make-over, the 34-year-old London-based Russian, who trained as a set designer with the Royal Shakespeare Company, took the down-at-heels palace and glorified it.

"Just like every job we do, we have to reflect the location," Alex says. The feel of the family home is evoked with fragrant cedar wood-scented cupboards, Lebanese tie chairs with inlaid mother-of-pearl marquetry, carved screens that cast patterns

of uplighters, pilasters and fluted columns, more marble than the Taj Mahal and gilding to dazzle.

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Alex Kravetz describes the house style as "eclectic, transitional, classical and contemporary". Now that the phrase "very Arab" has become synonymous in the West with OTT opulence, this skilful interpretation of the past, matching the contemporary needs of a modern hotel, has been sensitively done. Some of the flourishes are positively Biblical – like the wall in the Cellar restaurant, made out of stacked local terracotta pots, unchanged since the time when Christ turned water into wine.

This exercise in understanding Palestinian style, and making it internationally

something" for a French look, and the other in Arabic style, a distinction that the hotel will maintain.

The house, which is really only a tiny part of the gigantic hotel project, has been restored as the main entrance lobby with reception areas, a basement restaurant and a top-floor restaurant.

Simeon Halestad, the British architect based with Arcadia in Spain, seamlessly uses the same Jerusalem stone, arched and vaulted, for the guest bedroom bags in garden wings. Olive trees in the courtyard, which have been there since the Nativity, will be flanked by palms planted in by California-based landscapers, Site Concepts.

And not even the legendary Star of Wonder in Bethlehem can out-sparke the lighting scheme for this courtyard and the outdoor pool by Sally Storey of Lighting Design International in London. Indoors, she balances Persian candelabras with halogen and fibre-optics, hidden in thick windowsills and vaulted ceilings. Outdoors, she has created pools of light in pergolas all along the new construction.

"A lot of the hotel work was driven by political constraints," Kravetz explains. "Every item that we don't get from Palestine has to be imported through Israel, which has encouraged me to source locally for accessories."

Stencilled on the Jasser Palace plans, which the designers first drew up last July, is the old Hebrew name for Bethlehem, "Beit Lehem", Hebrew for "House of Bread". In Arabic it is "Bayt Lahim", meaning "House of Meat".

Not to be outdone on the Millennium tourist drive to the Holy Land, the Israelis are busy marketing Nazareth 2000.

A craftsman returns to his manor

The man who took art (and football) into Whitechapel is back, in a new exhibition. By Rosemary Hill

WHITECHAPEL IN the 1880s was a place of horror: The Jack the Ripper murders were only the most terrible manifestations of depravity in a part of London whose violence and poverty haunted the middle classes like a recurring nightmare. Fear of unrest, and the promptings of conscience, sent young men from the universities into the East End to try to improve matters. One of them was a 25-year-old architect, Charles Robert Ashbee. In the summer of 1888, in the midst of the streets where the Ripper murders took place later that year, he set up his Guild of Handicraft.

Ashbee was a socialist and an idealist, but not a naive one. He had been living in Whitechapel for two years, at Toynbee Hall, the first of the university settlements. He had also been impressed by William Morris's remark that if the Revolution actually came, then all the socialists would be hung the next day – for they were promising people much more than they could give them.

Ashbee's idea was to give the members of his guild something tangible – work, education and entertainment. There was an art school attached to the guild – where the young Roger Fry taught – and there was even a football team.

At first there were just four craftsmen. At its peak, the Guild had 40 – most of them local men – who learned to make furniture, metal-work, jewellery, wrought-iron and printed books. Ashbee's designs were poised between the refined tail-end of the Gothic Revival and the

first stirrings of art nouveau.

Today it is the metalwork that is best-known and most collected – delicate mustard pots on arching legs, like insects by Aubrey Beardsley; bowls with swooping handles and surfaces lit with points of colour in enamel and semi-precious stones. The furniture, too, though scarcer, was of international importance. At the eighth Viennese Secessionist exhibition in 1900, the centrepiece was a cabinet made by the guild.

Vienna was a long way from Whitechapel. So, for that matter was the West End of London, where the guild established a shop. Yet it is from there, from the point of view of the patrons and collectors of Ashbee himself, that the story of the Guild of Handicraft was said.

Now the Geffrye Museum in Shoreditch is bringing Ashbee back to the East End, in the first London exhibition devoted to the work of the Guild.

The show has been organised by Alan Crawford, Ashbee's biographer, who welcomes the chance to look at his subject from a new angle. The Guild, he concludes, gained as much from the East End as it gave. Indeed when it moved, in 1903, to Gloucestershire it lost direction and closed six years later. The city was the ideal place to nurture the Arts and Crafts Movement's mix of Radicalism, re-

action and practical socialism.

Ashbee, like Morris, was the son of a successful entrepreneur and a child of the London suburbs. He was a ruralist for whom the country represented an ideal, but the world he understood was the city. The crafts he wanted to revive were urban. In fact, they were the luxury trades in which London had always excelled and which had, in varying degrees, survived the Industrial Revolution. When Ashbee set up shop, there were still dozens of small furniture manufacturers trading in Whitechapel.

It was on to those existing roots that Ashbee grafted his own ideas of craft practice and socialism. Opposed to the division of labour, he made sure the men and boys who came to the school were trained in all aspects of their craft. He brought the trades together, encouraging metalsmiths to work with cabinet-makers in a way that was traditionally unknown. The Arts and Crafts philosophy of the workshop was of a place in which work should be satisfying, and where bridges could be built between social classes through practical co-operation. The football and amateur theatricals, in which Ashbee took enthusiastic part, were another way of integrating work into a whole, fulfilling way of life.

For 14 years the Guild succeeded,

though its finances balanced on a knife-edge. Public concern about East London, and the presence of the university missions, created a climate in which such a hybrid could flourish. Art exhibitions were being

organised nearby in what would become the Whitechapel Gallery. Potential customers who recollect from the fashion for "slumming" were nevertheless curious about the East End, and would come to see the workshops and buy from them. It was, as Crawford says, between those two currents of thought, the Arts and Crafts Movement and socialist philanthropy, that the Guild found its "momentum and reality". In the Cotsworths, where the education of working men was regarded with hostility, it founded.

The craftsmen, too, were out of place. Ashbee talked of taking them "home", but they were Londoners. Their lives are scantily documented, but Crawford's researches show that, for most, the experience of the Guild was critical – for better and, occasionally, worse. At least two went on to teach their crafts in jobs to which, without the Guild, they could

not have aspired. Others could not find their way alone when it failed. The Guild's departure from London did not, however, mark the end of its influence there. Ashbee had set up a watch committee to save buildings under threat, a project that became the continuing Survey of London. When, in 1912, a new use was needed for the 18th-century Geffrye Almshouses, it was Arts and Crafts petitioners who won the argument for turning it into a museum of English furniture and interiors.

Now, newly extended and with admission still free, the Geffrye is the ideal place to celebrate the ideals of Ashbee's years in the East End.

'C R Ashbee in East London' is at the Geffrye Museum, Kingsland Road, London E2 (0171-739 9893) until 21 March 1999, Tues-Sun, 10-5; Sunday, 2-5. Admission free.



WHEN MOST people think of John Dugdale, they see him naked and in muscle definition. Standing men and men around, enjoying a life less each and every other side to Dugdale's still-lives, portraits which are now at London's Hamiltons.

For someone who is cent of his sight, Dugdale has a clear vision of the world he can be able to actually see. But of his mind's eye makes up for that. "I have a visual picture of every graph," he says.

DEREK DEANE'S production of the English National Nutcracker isn't quite clean fun if you are an paving attention. Dancer Clara's godfather is an implicit tone of his a paedo-philic towards her are clearly appropriate. The the figure he cuts in here is odd for a traditional children.

Childish eyes probably don't take this in. Perhaps it won't be too disturbing by Clara's dysfunction, her philandering father, his mistress to their company. But that, too, is a psychological sense to escape into dreamlike, wistfully contemporary cocktail dresses and

Don't cry for me Annabella

Most stars chase eternal youth. Not this one. She's hell-bent on ageing as painfully as possible. By Stephen Applebaum

Death becomes Annabella Sciorra. In Abel Ferrara's creepy oddity, *The Addiction*, she made vampirism look chic and sexy as she sucked the life out of Lili Taylor; her face transformed into a death's-head by the film's chiaroscuro lighting. She also thrived on the deadly atmosphere of Ferrara's *The Funeral*, where her drawn features appeared etched with regret. The souls of Sciorra's women, you feel, are in a permanent state of partial eclipse; even their happiest moments tinged with melancholy. Now this lingering sadness has found full lachrymal expression in *What Dreams May Come*, a visually arresting tale of love beyond the grave, from the visionary New Zealand film-maker Vincent Ward.

In this painterly epic, Sciorra so immerses herself in the character of Annie, an artist who is first plunged into depression by the death of her children, and then driven to suicide - an act which literally lands her in Hell - by the loss of her husband (Robin Williams), that you're convinced she's reliving real trauma.

Sciorra will admit that she had doubts about taking the part. "I felt that there would be too much crying involved, and that it would be very tough to do that and remain sane at the end of the day. Ultimately, I was afraid of how far I would go with this character, because I knew I wouldn't be faking it."

Such a performance is the product of what could be described as a Faustian pact which the actress has made with her emotions. Living the roles "makes you older faster". She says, "When I came back from doing *What Dreams May Come*, I was so tired. I was walking down the street with a friend one day, and I said, 'I feel like I got older on this movie.' And she said, 'You look like you did.' I didn't like hearing that, but, physically, I think it does take a toll; especially if you're the kind of person who is emotional and cries a lot."

She did what she could to cushion the blows. "I took an apartment in San Francisco, where we shot the film, and filled it with a lot of extra bed-linen for friends and family, so that at the end of the day I would have a dinner to cook, or a niece or a nephew to hang out with, and have some sort of normal life." (Sciorra is not "attached" at the moment.)

This desire for normality is reflected in the diminutive actress's plain, no-nonsense personality. When asked about the spiritual themes underpinning *What Dreams May Come*, and the notion of an afterlife, she refuses to play the PR game and launch into some airy-fairy New Age discourse.



Annabella Sciorra: 'I was afraid of how far I would go with this character, because I knew I wouldn't be faking it'

Neville Elder

"I saw the film as a dream or a Greek myth. To me it was about the opportunities that we have to create a wonderful life or a hell for ourselves." People tend to assume Sciorra is a crucifix-clutching Catholic. Not at all. "I couldn't connect with the afterlife thing because I don't have any strong religious beliefs. I think when you die there's just a lot of dirt. Some journalists have gotten really angry with me for saying that, but that's how I feel. If anything, this movie has made me more concerned with immediate things, like the people in my life and the love that I have. Honest to God, I could be a pretty cynical person, but about stuff like that I feel grateful everyday."

Indeed, she gets so carried away by the theme of love that she suddenly finds herself on the brink of tears. She has always been this way, she says. Even as a child, when she watched the emotionally charged films of Irene Papas and Gina Rowlands at festivals with her brother, she "would feel get excited - feel all this stuff bubbling up inside".

Is such trembly sensitivity the result of an insecure childhood? Sciorra laughs. "I did this movie, *The Cure*," she recalls, "and after doing 18 takes of my son dying, the director said, 'What did they do to you as a child?' I was painfully shy, but I've had a really very loving, very nurturing family, a happy childhood."

In fact, Sciorra's closeness to her family is one reason she still resides in New York. She moved there from Connecticut when she was 11, with her veterinarian father and fashion stylist mother, and has no intention of moving permanently to the West Coast.

If she had decamped to Los Angeles in 1991, following her acclaimed performance opposite Wesley Snipes in Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever*, then she might not have had to wait until she was 34 to star in her first \$85m blockbuster. Instead, Sciorra remains an actress "on the verge" of a breakthrough - 10 years after her debut in Nancy Savoca's *True Love* and despite glowing critical notices for her performances in films such as *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*, *Internal Affairs*, *Cadillac Man* (also with Robin Williams), and *Cop Land*.

"I think if I would get on a fucking airplane and go out to LA, and get an apartment and stay there, that might help the breakthrough situation," she concedes. "(Casting directors) used to come there more often, and you didn't really have to be in LA. But now it seems like there are less and less roles. When they make those big movies, they hire one big name and, because they just want to pay one big salary, the rest are like whoever'll work for the cheapest amount. It has nothing to do with the quality of acting."

She also believes Hollywood often overlooks her because they cannot see past her Italian background. Her agent told her recently that she had not been considered for a role in a family drama because of her ethnicity. Yet the actresses cast as the character's siblings were exactly her colouring, if not darker. "Sometimes I think that if I was going to do it all over I would change my name," she says ruefully.

Inevitably, several actresses were given a shot at *What Dreams May Come* before it was offered to Sciorra, but the limited sum offered by the film's producers received a cool response. Meryl Streep and Michelle Pfeiffer are both rumoured to have turned the part down, after which the offer went to Annette Bening.

When discussions with her collapsed, Sciorra stepped in.

Whether or not *What Dreams May Come* elevates Annabella Sciorra to Hollywood's A-list, she has enough acting work to see her through to the end of the millennium. And no, she does not want to spend New Year's Eve, 1999, somewhere spiritual. Such as the pyramids, as one journalist suggested to her recently.

"Who the fuck wants to get on a plane and go there? No. I imagine that I will be with my family, where I am every year on New Year's Eve, eating and drinking wine."

'*What Dreams May Come*' is released 26 December

Out of sight but still in the mind's eye

WHEN MOST people think of the photographer John Dugdale's images they see lean, naked men with good muscle definition. Standing men, reclining men and men just lounging around enjoying a life of leisure. Gay icons each and everyone. But there another side to Dugdale's work: the still-lives, portraits and landscapes which are now being shown at London's Hamiltons Gallery.

For someone who has lost 75 per cent of his sight, Dugdale has a very clear vision of the world. He may not be able to actually see what's in front of him but the clarity and strength of his mind's eye more than make up for that. "I have a full, clear visual picture of everything I photograph," he says. "Eyesight and

vision are completely different - vision starts inside my head." All of Dugdale's photographs have a timeless quality and are immersed in a multi-toned cobalt hue, highlighted with specks of white reflective light.

The still-lives of piled-high fruit, candlesticks and crockery recall the old masters, while the ordered interiors conjure up the calm of the Dutch masters' domestic scenes. The muted compositions kid you into thinking of oils rather than print, and achieve an arresting beauty.

Wells Cathedral, the South Downs and Brussels sprouts all get the unique Dugdale treatment. The Venice skyline is also captured: a vulnerable band of buildings floating on the surface of a mass of intense

VISUAL ARTS

JOHN DUGDALE
HAMILTONS, LONDON/
JULIAN HARTNOLL

blue water; under a huge, watery sky. Dugdale, 38, was diagnosed with AIDS in 1985, and his loss of sight is a result of that. Death hangs in the air in much of his work, although the references are not visually overt. *Paris Porcelain Teapot* (1997) is a limited-edition print of which all proceeds will go to the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

It was in 1993, after years of

working as a professional photog-

rapher, that Dugdale suffered a stroke that destroyed most of his sight. What was left was little more than a hazy blur on the lower periphery of his left eye. This was the moment when many people would simply have given up but Dugdale merely switched to a different, more manageable technique and brought in assistants to see on his behalf.

He uses a large antique Kodak camera, the simple developing process cyanotype and powerful magnifying glasses. His assistants focus the camera and, by closely following his detailed instructions and describing for him the fall of light, put together his compositions.

Within walking distance of Hamil-

tions, there is a second exhibition fea-

turing work by Dugdale. The selection on show at Julian Hartnoll's Gallery, as part of "Men III", concentrate on the male nude. Alongside his photographs hang works by Derek Jarman, Robert Mapplethorpe and Anderson & Low.

Dugdale features in many of his own works, perhaps most memorably in Elton John's bath, where he appears languid, peaceful and focused on the simple pleasure of life.

KATE MIKHAIL

John Dugdale, Hamiltons, 13 Car-
los Place, London W1 (0171-499
9493). "Men III", Julian Hartnoll's
Gallery, 14 Mason's Yard, off Duke
Street, London SW1 (0171-839 3842).
Both exhibitions run to 23 Dec



Detail from John Dugdale's 'Table Top with English Brass'

Too sweet to be wholesome

DEREK DEANE'S production of the English National Ballet's Nutcracker isn't quite good clean fun if you're an adult and paying attention. Drosselmeyer is Clara's godfather and the implicit tone of his attentions towards her are clearly inappropriate. The threat of paedophilia provides a subconscious logic to the sinister figure cuts in her dreams, but it is odd for a ballet that is a traditional children's treat.

Childish eyes presumably don't take in this. Perhaps they won't be too disturbed, either, by Clara's dysfunctional family, her philandering father inviting his mistress to their Christmas party. But that, too, gives psychological sense to Clara's escape into dreamland; and besides, it is part of Deane's wittily contemporary staging, where the women wear chic cocktail dresses and one guest

DANCE

THE NUTCRACKER
ENGLISH NATIONAL
BALLET
LONDON COLISEUM

conducts a domestic squabble on her mobile phone. The audience laughed at the Robotcop, Barbie Doll and Michael Jackson lookalikes which arrived as Drosselmeyer's dolls.

Derek Deane, returning to

performance after almost a decade, comes close to dominating the whole show as Drosselmeyer, vividly painting the character's ambiguous fascination. His mime is wonderfully incisive as he summons the magic which delights the party children and populates the dream; but he also shows he has lost none of his smooth partnering skill in a long, strenuous pas de deux with Clara.

The rest of Deane's choreography is less interesting, especially in the Kingdom of Sweets. The set numbers seem surprisingly predictable,

although the giant moving bags of candies are a witty invention. Sue Blane's designs - so elegant in the earlier scenes - are part of the problem here. It was Crawford, whose twiflet arms could probably snap, has toned down her simmers and curtailed affectations, making her a charming Clara.

Perhaps it would have had more sparkle for me with a different couple in the focal posé de deux for the Nutcracker Prince and the Sugar Plum Fairy. Thomas Edur takes great care to move with clean geometry, but he is not an exciting virtuoso. Agnes Oaks lacks stretch and her phrasing suffers from a monotonous sameness. I can only conclude that the popular appeal of this partnership rests on their blond, catwalk glamour.

NADINE MEISNER

To 9 Jan: 0171-632 8300

Titter ye not. This is serious

MUSICAL

THE LEGENDARY
GOLEM

NEW END THEATRE

LONDON

ator and his coerced, unhappy creation, transferred to a context where the desperate fight for cultural survival gives the whole business an ambiguous justification. This is clearly the musical that Freedman and Shostak have set out to write. The trouble is that they have hedged their bets so much on sugary love interest (the number "Love Turns the World" should be retitled "Love Turns the Stomach") and formulaic father/son conflict, that the key twists don't loom large enough.

Or coherently. When the Golem, crazed with frustration at being an outsider-slave, runs amok and kills one of the Chris-

tian guards who are terrorising the ghetto, David Burt's dignified, dark-voiced rabbi kneels and sings a song about how he now recognises himself and his own capacity for violence in the Golem. Given his previous pacifism, this makes as much sense as giving Professor Higgins a ditty about how Eliza's example has made him realise that, deep down, he's always had a hankering to be a lady.

That's not the only puzzle. I failed to work out why, in a Prague where the Jews are constantly harassed about their identification papers and there's a virulent drive for racial purity, this makes as much sense as giving Professor Higgins a ditty about how Eliza's example has made him realise that, deep down, he's always had a hankering to be a lady.

The 1580 plot is framed by a story also set in Prague at the start of the 1989 Velvet Revolution. Parallels between these two examples of oppression transcended and under-explored in favour of uplift and the muzzy message that "Legends lead us from despair/Golems can be shaped from fire and air". Which may be true, but as expressed here, just sounds a bit of a miss.

PAUL TAYLOR

To 17 Jan: 0171-794 0022



MUSIC

Awop bop aloo bop and so on

The thing about pop music is it's everywhere. It's part of the day to day fabric of the world we live in, whether we like it or not. Which spells trouble for the high-minded. In the penultimate piece in our series, Andy Gill considers what it means to be a rock critic

Pop is the most immediate of media. Not in the sense of immediate gratification offered by television, but in the immediacy of its response to change. Compared to the years of production meetings, market research and logistical analysis that go into the average TV programme before the first lens-cap gets removed, pop's reaction-time is virtually instant, a tireless cultural barometer shifting to the subtlest of currents.

Yet behind pop's malleable, accommodating surface lurks that mesmerising, obsessional quality Noel Coward recognised in his observation about the potency of cheap music. A beloved tune may become patinated with a lifetime of memories and associations, but in your imagination it never ages, never sounds less than Cellophane-fresh. It's the opposite of what happens in most other media, where the initial attraction is impossible to relive. And though television deals in much the same kind of instant fix for pop, being a visual medium it recedes more swiftly into the past; a documentary about punk invariably looks more dated than punk music sounds.

It'll sound that way for ever; too; no other art form is as skilfully designed for repetition as pop, with the possible exception of computer games. And even the allure of Lara Croft's pounding thighs diminishes with time, while "God Only Knows" goes on for ever. So: immediate response, instant appeal, unlimited repetition, deepening attachment - such are the considerations rock critics have to grapple with when stalking the many-headed beast of pop. Not that you need to hunt far to find it: no other art form is quite as democratically available, or as omnipresent.

Pop was the medium the baby-boom generation chose to carry it into adulthood. For millions of people, it's simply second nature, the language in which their lives have been defined. Accordingly, rock critics work with the knowledge that they will be read and understood by a broad swath of casual readers, as well as the charmed circle of professional insiders. Read, understood, and judged, too: a popular reader may only be able to fantasise about seeing that new ENO presentation, and will probably have forgotten the review by the time s/he eventually gets to attend the opera; but that same reader could, within the hour, be grumbling about how a



A tale of two record collections: the great Greil Marcus (left) and the gonzo Tom Wolfe, two major figures in the history of music journalism

reviewer has misled them into dashing out and buying that Manic Street Preachers album from the petrol station on the corner.

Rock criticism as we know it began in the mid-Sixties with the rise of Bob Dylan, when the tools of explication first became necessary. Before that, most pop was a matter of mooning and jiving, with songs knocked together from a small portfolio of romantic clichés; but when Dylan ported the baggage of poetry and protest into pop, there was a need for commentary to reflect the puzzling new depth the form had taken on. The underground press rushed in to fill the vacuum, particularly in America, where magazines like *Crawdaddy* and *Rolling Stone* gave writers such as Greil Marcus and Lester Bangs the room to investigate their subject more deeply and, in Bangs's case, more bizarrely. Marcus's groundbreaking Seventies collection of essays, *Mystery Train*, remains a high-water mark of pop criticism, notable for the way its essays on The Band, Sly



A tale of two record collections: the great Greil Marcus (left) and the gonzo Tom Wolfe, two major figures in the history of music journalism



THE CRITICAL CONDITION

Stone and Elvis Presley revealed the form's allegorical lucidity. The entire field of rock criticism, though, has since been choked by the inordinate influence of Hunter S Thompson and Tom Wolfe - both good writers, but both more journalist than critic (the reader who let Thompson influence his choice of music would find himself listening to the cocktail cowboy Jimmy Buffet; heaven alone knows what horrors comprise Wolfe's record collection). Thompson's "gonzo" style has been responsible for countless egotistical incursions into their own features by rock journalists desperate to present themselves as at the very centre of whatever scene is happening. Wolfe's New Journalism approach, meanwhile, remains a useful option for writers who need to make dull musicians - and yes, they are mostly dull - "sound" better in print through lurid, onomatopoeic descriptions of rock-star lifestyles. But however lurid the lifestyle, no amount of New Journalism can

take a bad song and make it better. And there are so many bad songs - and worse, songs that are neither amazingly good nor amusingly bad, but simply indifferent. Mediocrity is, in a sense, the condition to which all pop aspires; this commercial art form tries to insinuate its way into the affections of as many punters as possible. After all, the average is always more assured of widespread popularity than the exceptional, which can fail just as exceptionally as it succeeds.

So, while in other media the avant garde is supported and encouraged through the luxury of patronage and subsidy, in pop it's left to fend for itself alongside Robbie Williams and The Spice Girls, a sort of self-generating, self-funding R&D department. That it thrives quite as much as it does is almost entirely due to the efforts of rock critics who lavish love and attention on neglected musical species until, like those strange desert plants that bloom only once every quarter-century, they eventually burst into wider recognition.

Yet those same rock journalists

find themselves, almost as a matter of course, loathed by the music industry, and particularly its pampered stars, for occasionally daring to voice an opinion at odds with the company line. It's indicative of the selfish, ungrateful side of the business that a critic's poorly remunerated devotion to others' work should be repaid with such contempt by those who are made rich and famous through that devotion. How many

times have you heard a pop star whine about the media, in all available media?

Over the last couple of decades, as its techniques of persuasion - copy approval, access to stars, etc - have grown more powerful, the industry has come to view the rock critic as little more than a glorified cheerleader. Sadly, many critics seem to acquiesce in this assessment, which has led to the creeping debasement of rock journalism as a critical mode. Stunted by an infantile preoccupation with sexual matters, showbiz discourse is routinely conducted in a lather of hyperbole

- with everything being the best ever,

the greatest, the sexiest, the most this or that - yet with a hitherto disregard of the basic background knowledge which other critical disciplines assume as a prerequisite.

By its very nature, the weekly pop press is heavily dependent on the rapid turnover of stars and scenes. One of the basic truths of music-paper publishing is that sales soar when there is a definable "scene" -

punk, new romantics, baggy Britpop, whatever - for readers to latch on to. Accordingly, much of the effort of writers on the weeklies is expended in trying to develop such a scene. Unfortunately, less and less time is spent on the basic matter of facts: only the other week, the once-authoritative *NME* carried a reference to "The Moody Blues' vestal virgin turning cartwheels across the floor", presumably written by someone whose music history handbook didn't stretch as far as Procol Harum.

The alternative to the weeklies is the monthly music press that developed as the original baby-boomer wave rolled its relentless way through the Eighties and Nineties. Critics writing for magazines such as *Mojo* and *Uncut* pride themselves on their attention to historical detail - they wouldn't just know about Procol Harum's big hit, they'd give you the running-order of every album and the set-list from their last gig, too. Whether you wanted it or not. Derided as "dad's mag" by the weeklies, they're sometimes slow to manoeuvre, but still provide a more reliable account than most.

Their archival, fact-based approach is certainly preferable to academic pop criticism, a vapid form involving either long, sterile essays on such riveting subjects as pop and politics, women "in" pop and rock against racism, or the drab emersion of strands of subcultural phenomena in which the poor beast (or its poor offspring, youth culture)

is strapped to the dissection table and agonisingly deprived of any life it may once have embodied. For such critics, pop is just another subject, albeit more phenomenal than most. Ask them what they feel about the music, whether they love it madly, and they wouldn't know what you're talking about.

This is, perhaps, the crux of the matter. People become rock critics for all manner of reasons - as a stepping-stone to other forms of journalism or media work because they wanted to meet pop stars; because they couldn't make it as a pop star themselves - but the best are those for whom the interest goes beyond dedication, into the realm of deep emotional attachment. Because ultimately, the worth of any rock criticism is always in proportion to the critic's love of music. Any music. All music. Except Phil Collins, of course.

Edward Seckerson on classical music criticism, page 14

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For completists only

Christmas comes but once a year, for which we should be thankful. Not least because the festive season heralds a flood of sumptuously packaged, must-have box-sets. Doh! Andy Gill tackles the best in pop...

THE BIGGEST album release of the year, quite literally, has to be Sinatra: The Capitol Years (Capitol). Collecting together all of Frankie's 21 albums for the label - from 1954's ground-breaking Songs For Young Lovers (arguably the first-ever concept album) to 1962's *Sinatra Sings... Of Love And Things* - it captures the singer at his most definitive, riding the swell of his second wave of success that accompanied his Oscar for *From Here To Eternity*.

With the innovative string arrangements of Nelson Riddle and Billy May encouraging Sinatra to his finest interpretations, this is the sound of the American Dream in full expansion, bursting with post-war confidence, but not yet curdled into the arrogant swagger of rock'n'roll. Suave and slightly salty, there's a laconic confidence to his readings of even slightly dubious material, with Sinatra's reservations signalled by the occasional stylized equivalent of a raised eyebrow. Few other singers have taken such huge risks, and made it all seem so effortless.

By comparison, most of the other boxes on offer seem slightly small-minded. All *The Young Dudes: The Anthology* (Columbia), for instance, takes three CDs to cover the career of Mott The Hoople, yet still manages to get it not quite right. Sandwiching one disc of hits between two featuring out-takes and "rarities" of questionable value, it rather neglects the band's



Boxing clever: Frank Sinatra and, to a lesser extent, Mott The Hoople; below, John Coltrane

Dylanesque origins, depicting them instead as just a proto-heavy-rock outfit who somehow made the timely leap to glam.

From the same era, *The Vaudeville Years of Fleetwood Mac 1968 to 1970* (Receiver) offers two CDs of out-takes, five cuts and jams from the dog days of the Mac: the period bounded by their first chart successes and the eventual departure of the guitar genius, Peter Green. They were,

by a country-blues mile, the finest progressive blues band of their era, and this set captures them at their most innovative, as they put together the landmark *Then Play On* album that included Green's extraordinary "Oh Well" and "Green Manalish".

In their blend of blues and prog-rock, The Black Crowes are probably the closest Nineties equivalent to Fleetwood Mac. Great psychedelic swamp-blues rockers, they were at their best

when most closely following the *Eric On Main Street* blueprint with 1992's *The Southern Harmony And Bible Companion*, and their poorest when straying into psychedelic excess. The five-CD box *Sho' Nuff* (American) simply brings together their four studio albums, each bolstered by the obligatory couple of bonus tracks, plus a live EP from 1995, in a box apparently designed to facilitate spillage.

The roots of the blues are handily dealt with in *Beg, Borrow Or Steal* (Catfish), a three-CD set purporting to cover "the origins, music and influence of Robert Johnson". It's a tidy idea, with a disc of 29 Johnson recordings book-ended by one disc each featuring his precursors (Son House, Charley Patton and Skip James) and those he influenced, such as Elmore James, Muddy Waters, Peter Green and Canned Heat.

More focused - though just as diverse - is *In Progress & In* Motion 1965-1998 (Columbia), a three-CD set covering the career of Taj Mahal, who has almost single-handedly kept alive the notion of the country-blues as a living artform. Not just a bluesman, Taj has a broader range of reference than most of his peers, bringing into play such long-lost modes as the cakewalk, along with the musical styles of Hawaii, the Caribbean, and the wider African diaspora. Given his intelligence and his breadth, however, this set is slightly disappointing, neglecting as it does the rockier, more rhythmic end of his R&B.

1998

The Transatlantic Story (Castle) is a four-CD retrospective of one of Britain's pre-eminent folk labels, though too much of it is wasted covering the label's early years, a mish-mash of opportunistic independence whose releases covered sex talk, comedy, poetry, satire, politics and the Portsmouth Sinfonia, who were all of the above. The set only gets going with the second CD, dedicated to the likes of Bert Jansch, John Renbourn and Ralph McTell.

Finally, XTC's *Transistor Blast* (Cooking Vinyl) collates together on four discs their in-concert and studio sessions recorded for the BBC through the late Seventies and Eighties. It's all high-quality work, presenting the Swindon combo as the clever-flick pop precursors of such as Mansun. "We didn't know what we were doing," explains Andy Partridge in the sleeve note, "but we did it loud."

Costello paired with Bacharach? It should have worked - I rushed, I paid

It gathers dust upon my rack

The most expensive musak made

Return to stage for Plant and Page

Return-to-form, U2

Blur, Oasis treading water

Up to scratch but nothing new

Boy bands, girl bands, factory fresh

Fast-track plans, identi-hits

Stylish coiffured, choreographed

Now available as kits

Other chart-space allocations

Share and Cher-alike

Please send my congratulations

Decent tunesmiths all on strike?

Of the three Canadians Dion, Morissette and Adams Two have names like vintage cars One is sir and two are madams

This year's talent, mostly Welsh First prize to... of course, The Manics

Second, Catatonia

- Melanie plus four mechanics

Welcome back, Massive Attack Wind up clock, put on pyjamas Personal album-of-the-year?

Cold and Bouncy by High Llamas



Motion 1965-1998 (Columbia), a three-CD set covering the career of Taj Mahal, who has almost single-handedly kept alive the notion of the country-blues as a living artform. Not just a bluesman, Taj has a broader range of reference than most of his peers, bringing into play such long-lost modes as the cakewalk, along with the musical styles of Hawaii, the Caribbean, and the wider African diaspora. Given his intelligence and his breadth, however, this set is slightly disappointing, neglecting as it does the rockier, more rhythmic end of his R&B.

The Transatlantic Story (Castle) is a four-CD retrospective of one of Britain's pre-eminent folk labels, though too much of it is wasted covering the label's early years, a mish-mash of opportunistic independence whose releases covered sex talk, comedy, poetry, satire, politics and the Portsmouth Sinfonia, who were all of the above. The set only gets going with the second CD, dedicated to the likes of Bert Jansch, John Renbourn and Ralph McTell.

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Cold and Bouncy by High Llamas

...while Phil Johnson takes a deep breath before examining the latest offerings from the wonderful world of jazz

THIS BOX-SET business may be getting out of hand. The Blue Note Years comprises 14 CDs, all set in 7 digi-packs, all in an LP-sized box. The set also includes a 48-page booklet of session photographs by the label's co-owner, Francis Wolff, along with some contemporary pictures by Jimmy Katz. For this 60th anniversary celebration - 1939-99, and still going - of the greatest jazz record label there has ever been, you pay a price closer to the cost of annual car insurance than to

normal impulse buys at Virgin or Tower. It's no wonder that it's a limited edition. The dedicated fans and collectors at whom the artefact is presumably aimed will already have most of the tracks featured on the discs, which are programmed according to both chronology and genre in seven volumes, such as "1955-1960: The Jazz Messenger" and "1956-1957: Organ and Soul".

Both the final volume, where

tunes associated with the label's old artists are reinterpreted by the current roster, and the previous one, which includes tracks by Earl Klugh, Ronnie Laws and Billy McFerrin, are less than essential, and that's putting it kindly. Almost everything else, however, is reliably great. Some of the best shots come from the earliest sessions recorded by Blue Note's founder, Alfred Lion. The boogie-woogie of Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis, Sidney Bechet's stunning version of "Summertime", and Edmond Hall's "Profoundly Blue", with its

melancholy-sounding celeste, are intensely musical performances that testify to Lion's eminently humanist approach to the recording of jazz by black Americans. Compared to the Blue Note biggie, the 8 CD box, *The Classic Quartet: Complete Impulse Studio Recordings by John Coltrane*, is, at £60 or less, relatively cheap and cheerful. There is a wealth of previously unreleased material, and the chronological tracking of Coltrane's incredible journey from the con-

ventionality, if beautifully rendered, standards of the *Ballads* album of 1962, through *A Love Supreme*, and on to the deep interior space of *Transition* and *Sunship* from 1965, makes for the most fascinating listening.

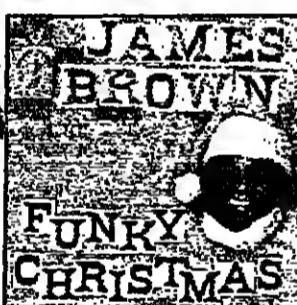
If there is a fault, then it is this:

that box-sets in general are just so unwieldy and uncomfortable to use.

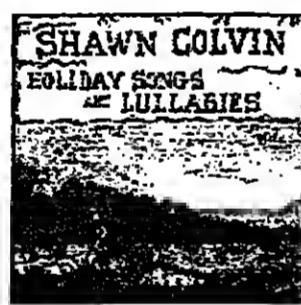
To assert that the original albums have the status of definitive texts might be untenable, given that the selection of their contents was always rather contingent, but somehow they remain more satisfactory, and more real than the warts and all of the "complete" versions.

THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS ALBUMS

REVIEWED BY ANDY GILL



JAMES BROWN
Funky Christmas
Spectrum



SHAWN COLVIN
Holiday Songs And Lullabies
Columbia



CYNDI LAUPER
Merry Christmas...Have A Nice Life!
Epic

Camp comes to heavy metal

HEAVY METAL has long been regarded as one of the less subtle musical genres - an essentially conservative style that is regularly revived to meet the needs of mutinous adolescents. But if Wednesday night's metal extravaganza is anything to go by, post-modernism has finally wound its way into head-banging circles, and not before time.

What saved both Monster Magnet and Rob Zombie from reaching the depths of poor taste was their ability to send themselves up. While most of Monster Magnet's songs stuck to a similar formula - a slow prelude consisting of simple guitar figures and doom-laden drums erupting into thrashing power riffs - it was the singer Dave Wyndorf's knowingness that prevented it from becom-

ing a tedious trawl through the heavy-metal handbook. Wyndorf is a carefully crafted rock god complete with tight strides, a glossy mane and *Gladiator*-style pecs glistening beneath a naff leather waistcoat. He rolled around on the floor, surfed the edge of the stage and strode up and down bungling himself, as if to anticipate after-show congratulations. He even pulled the old simulated orgasm trick with a bottle of beer, and cackled triumphantly as if revelling in his own absurdity.

The guitars are pared down

and the pace is slowed for a more serious track, "Space Lord", to reveal the group's sensitive side, but Wyndorf cannot resist thrusting his hips about like a Scandinavian porn star. As cock-rockers Monster Magnet cannot be faulted. However, all their attempts at sobriety are ridiculous.

Rob Zombie was in possession of a similar knowingness but had mercifully few illusions about his sex appeal. With his Mad Max-meets-Pagin appearance, the former frontman of industrial metal act White Zombie cuts a simultaneously impressive and repulsive figure. Under his green-tinted dreadlocks and ZZ Top beard you can just make out eyes that radiate mischief. Their sound is fashioned by speed-metal guitars, growling death-metal

vocals, with a scattering of fractured horror flick samples, that hold an energising appeal but soon start to grate. You can also gauge the band's satire through their B-movie surroundings. A giant robot's head glowers from the back of the stage through green eyes, while the drum kit seems precariously balanced upon a fuzz-medieval treasure chest.

Zombie's chums on guitar and bass prowl around the stage and sneer at the audience like the chorus line from *Cats*, while Zombie himself runs up and down like a man possessed. Despite the testosterone bouncing from the Astoria's walls, it all seems gloriously camp. If their metal careers don't stay the course, there's always pantomime.

FIONA STURGES



MEGASTORES

Trust me: I wrote the review

Critics have come in for a lot of criticism. But don't paint them as bogeymen, says Edward Seckerson, concluding our series

Critic. Small word, big responsibility, mean reputation. Critics get a bad press. Critics are vindictive, critics are destructive; critics are the enemy, critics are to be feared; critics are users, never facilitators, parasites prospering at the creative artist's expense. Critics are frustrated performers. Those who cannot do, criticise.

So far I'm having trouble recognising myself.

Maybe the fault lies with the definition. A critic may be "a professional judge of art, music, literature etc" or - and could this be the source of the misconception - "a person who often finds fault and criticises". We all criticise. We all have opinions; we all express them. In my experience, the amateur critic - collectively Joe Public at large - is far less forgiving and far more effusive than the accredited professional. It's "awful", "terrible", "ghastly", "wonderful", "absolutely fabulous", darling, and there's an end of it. Ours not to reason why. We live in impatent times, an age of shorthand and sound-bites and sweeping generalisations. Never mind the quality or the width, and to hell with the detail, cut to the chase. The rush to judgement is inevitable. But good criticism effectively begins where judgement ends, with the whys, hows and wherefores. And "quality control" is not even half of it.

So this critic's credo begins like this: you can take or leave his opinion, but not his prose. Now admittedly this leaves him wide open to accusations of self-indulgence. Isn't it a fact that the critics of smart-assed critics invariably accuse them of using the event - be it a concert, opera, or recording, in my case - as a vehicle for their own self-gratification? Well, yes, it's a delicate balance. The clever prose that would seem to draw attention to itself at the expense of the event may be enjoyed rather more than it should be encouraged, but then again I'll take a good read over a conscientious evaluation any day. Criticism at its best is about sharing the experience. In a sense it's part of the experience, a kind of post-performance art. It's what happens after the applause has died. Because it's at this point that the critic effectively becomes both performer and reporter. If you were there, you'll be wanting to pit your wits against his or her better judgement; you'll be seeking to re-live the experience as you remembered it. A good review will help you do that. If you weren't there, you'll be wanting to know whether you should have been. And even if the event in question is a one-off (and many of my reviewing should are) consider the extent to which a creative piece of writing can serve as a kind of surrogate for the real thing. So let's hear



no more of this nonsense about the pointlessness of writing about something once it's over and done with. Long before I could afford to attend concerts or opera or even buy recordings, I grew familiar with works and performers I had not yet experienced through the well-chosen words of my predecessors.

Writing about music is a strange, even unnatural, business. Finding words to express sounds, finding images to express feelings expressed through melody, harmony, texture, may seem self-defeating; why verbalise that which by its very nature is a sensory experience? Because good musical commentary and analysis is enlightening. And that's something else that critics are not supposed to do. Enlighten. Notice

that I'm talking here about music before I talk about performance. To me a critic has as great a responsibility to the music, to the composers, as does the artist. How else are you to ascertain their success, or otherwise? It's never just about the notes, but the reasons for them. Why are they there, what do they say and mean? The critic should be asking the same questions as the performer, and coming up with valid, if not the same, answers and solutions. How to communicate the wit of Mozart, the savage irony of Shostakovich? You could describe the finale of Mozart's 39th Symphony as ending with an abrupt truncation of its all-pervasive seven-note theme or you could take the theory and characterise it thus: "the wood-

THE CRITICAL CONDITION

winds are still chortling away when Mozart slams the door on them". Similarly, with Shostakovich, you might simply refer to the grimly ironical use of Jewish folk tunes in his First Violin Concerto, or spell it out: "Jewish folk tunes whose smile had long since twisted into grimace were

ground under the heel of Vengerov's bow." A little imagination does go a long way. Of course, all this is presupposing that a critic's own musicality is sound. You cannot recognise what you do not yourself feel.

Which brings me to the thorny issue of "those-who-can't-do-write" - the critic as frustrated or failed performer. Well, leaving aside the equally contentious view that those who can do more often than not can't write, I find myself occupying the middle-ground position of doer and writer. Eight years as a professional actor and much longer as an amateur musician (percussionist, if you must know - Sir Simon Rattle has the dirt on my cymbal-playing) has helped me to appreciate, among other things, the vulnerability of per-

formers. And that's an insight I wouldn't be without. Of course it doesn't mean that I'm never guilty of burly criticism (heaven knows I've been on the receiving end of it), but I do believe that it tempers the temptation to be personal and/or destructive. The soprano Anne Evans once publicly threw a glass of red wine over the opera critic Tom Sutcliffe (not to be confused with our own Thomas Sutcliffe) with words to the effect of "Reggie and the company would like to buy you a drink" - not because his review of English National Opera's *Parsifal* was unfavourable (which it was), but because it was disrespectful of the then elderly and frail Reginald Goodall, a distinguished Wagnerian whose conducting Sutcliffe had described it. Yes, hut...

And that's where the art of criticism begins. But is it read, really read, taken to heart, pondered, even acted upon? Performers are always telling us that they never read reviews. Well, they don't, do they? Or is that just the bad reviews? Funny how they always flaunt the good ones. Then again, the composer Michael Berkeley revised his *Viola Concerto* specifically addressing criticisms raised in my review - a fact that I relate not to demonstrate how clever or powerful I am, but to illustrate that criticism need not necessarily result in a them-and-us situation; it can lead to a healthy and constructive exchange of ideas. Symbiosis. Criticism in action. At least until the next time I'm asked whether I liked it or not.

From busk till dawn

Spare a thought - and some change - for the talented musicians playing on a corner near you

SIGHT READINGS



MICHAEL CHURCH



Laurie Lewis

Street life: not an easy option

by an Irish bassist-clown who achieves miracles of audience participation without once stepping the magic line. Next comes a string quartet that wouldn't be out of place at the Wigmore Hall. Then come two singers announcing themselves as Joan Sutherland and Renata Tebaldi, who deliver a non-stop feast of Mozart and Puccini while taking it in turns to dash round with the beggar bowl, before finishing with a luxuriant rendering of the "Flower Duet" from *Lakmé*.

They seem a boldy convivial bunch, but cameras and notebooks make them instantly uneasy. While some are studying at the London conservatories, others are "resting" professionals whose chances at audition might, they say, be threatened if their husking came to light. They are also understandably loth to say what they earn, though £50 a day seems the average: oot terrible, but not easy money for singers who must bust a gut to be heard unamplified. Some-

times, says Tebaldi, wonderful things happen: last Christmas they found two tightly folded £50 notes at the bottom of the bowl. Sutherland has this job to thank for meeting the man she is about to wed, but they won't husk communally: you can't marry a voice and a violin.

Many of the string-players here are Chinese. One of the violinists in the Wigmore standard quartet is a Hong Kong engineering draughtsman named Kai Choi, who is the founder/co-ordinator of an unusual organisation. Sigma consists of a floating population of anything between 30 and 60 players, whom Choi directs wherever there is either an opportunity or - in the case of private parties - demand. Choi admits that giving up his designing career was initially a risk, and that it took time to find collaborators with the right combination of qualities: for musicians are by nature perfectionists, and husking requires a thick skin plus a theatrical ability to "project". In

the beginning he begged a huge box of sheet music to every gig, but he soon realised what the public wanted and found that it went over better if played from memory. He modestly eschews the virtuous guff that musicians usually use to describe their "outreach" aims, but outreach this is, and of the best possible kind.

When I ask what sort of living this game provides, he winces. "Let's call it a way of life." A stable way? "Not really. There are now so many groups that the ecosystem has been destroyed." A year ago there were so many players competing for the available cash that some gave up and went elsewhere. Only the toughest survive.

But some go on great things. After 20 years' slog, the Cambridge flautist Michael Copley has won serious fame with his Classic Buskers group. Nigel Kennedy used to busk, as did many other pillars of the musical establishment. Brian Hawkins, head of strings at the Royal College of Music,

supports it unconditionally. "It's excellent experience. I used to do it, and I'm pleased when my students do so. It takes bottle."

HAWKINS AND his friends deserve an accolade this week for responding to this column's recent appeal on behalf of the beleaguered music students in Tirana. There is a desperate shortage of sheet music in Albania's arts academy, and a total absence of decent instruments; several conservatoires at the richer end of Europe are now laying plans to ship out their cast-off violins and cellos, plus some of the barrow-loads of scores that are regularly hequeathed to them. Anyone wanting to make direct contact with the academy should write to its vice-rector, Bujar Sykja, c/o Arts Academy, Tirana, or fax him on 00 355 422 5488.

There is yet another conduit for those who want to lend a hand, in the form of a trust set up by June Emerson, a music publisher. The Albanian Musicians' Trust (Windmill House, York YO6 4HF) helps pay for scholarships for outstanding young musicians, and tries to mitigate the havoc that political anarchy has wrought in their early education. To get into the mood, listen to two marvellous CDs of Albanian music that have just been released. *Albanian Village Music* (Heritage HTCD40) consists of dances recorded in Tirana in the Thirties, and *Folk Music of Albania* (Topic TSCD904), collected in the Sixties, contains songs which, to Western ears, sound ravishingly strange.

ON THE AIR
ANTHONY PAYNE

THE BIRTHS on consecutive days of two giants of late-20th-century music prompted a celebration of unusual breadth on BBC Radio 3 last week. Messiaen is, of course, no longer with us, but on what would have been his 90th birthday we heard a whole evening of his music and that of related composers, interspersed with commentary and discussion.

Next day, it was the turn

of the still tumultuously creative Elliott Carter, and a broadcast from this year's Edinburgh Festival filling the better part of the evening brought us his recent Clarinet Concerto, in the company of some new compositions by Manoury and Boulez.

After the pusillanimous programme-planning that has marked rather too much of Radio 3's output in recent times, this generous helping of thought-provoking and emotionally resonant music struck a blow for the cause of serious modernism. Hooray for adult contemporary music, as my wife put it.

Apart from the life-enhancing vision of their work, each of these two composers spearheaded an approach to composition that can now be seen to have been of considerable historic importance. The complexity of Carter's thought, from the Fifties onwards, is now central to the idea of the maximalism that marks one of the outer reaches of our age's music, while Messiaen, himself, oot averse to textural and thematic complexity, also

pre-shadowed some of the prime elements of post-modernism. As we were reminded in one of the evening's discussion interludes, the mixture of ideas in his *Turangalila* symphony was considered an affront to musical taste when first heard here.

In fact, Messiaen posed considerable aesthetic problems during his middle years, and one of his most famous pupils, Pierre Boulez, made it quite clear that for all his admiration of the more constructivist aspect of his teacher's

At first it seemed a little dry but, on repetition, more and more revealing of desert mysteries

music, he could not take the uninhibited sweetness of much of the harmony - that very dichotomy which encouraged the post-modernists to mix styles and manners.

This was one among many somewhat perplexing aspects of Messiaen's art, and much light was thrown on them by friends and pupils during the course of the evening. The sharply alert yet intellectually generous George Benjamin recalled much interest from his times in Messiaen's company, and his perceptions continually fascinated. The influence of Messiaen's organ-playing on his static block structures was mentioned, for each newly registered passage in an organ performance requires a

halt for stop-pulling, initiating a structural habit. Then there was the musical influence of Debussy, which Benjamin heard not only in the other's colouristic harmony but also in those aspects of his style which are conspicuously non-Debussian. It was as if Messiaen was consciously trying to avoid Debussy's manner of thinking while admitting the profound effect of his harmonic world - a strangely compelling argument.

The use of chordal harmonies as precisely evocative objets sonores lies at a great distance from Carter's linear dialectic, yet that composer's new Clarinet Concerto, heard the following evening, celebrated the explosive of sunset colours in the south-western desert of the United States, an almost Messiaenic idea. Carter's response to that vast, quiet and comparatively featureless landscape yielded a very characteristic unfolding of conflicting counterpoints, nevertheless - at a first hearing a little dry, but on repetition increasingly revealing of desert mysteries.

In this same richly endowed programme we heard Manoury's splendidly inventive and texturally vital *Fragments pour un Portrait*, and Boulez's bewitching *Sur Incises* for three each of pianos, harps and percussion groups, something of a tindinabulating homage to Stravinsky, Bartók and Messiaen.

IF THIS is the season of goodwill, let's forget the pomp and circumstance of the big orchestras, and the overpaid megalomaniacs who wave a stick at them. Consider instead the opposite end of the snob spectrum: let's go down among the huskers. And I don't mean industrial-strength Bolivian bands, or winsome waifs with a penny whistle and a dog. I mean the people who brave public humiliation, police harassment and other adverse conditions of all kinds to create music which, by any standards, good.

One of the high points of my musical year occurred outside a London Sainsbury's, where I was transported to the American South by a young man with an electric guitar and a truly Orphic touch. Another was thanks to a Romanian clarinet-and-accordion duo who hopped on to my train at Leicester Square, hopped off at King's Cross, and in between played Viennese classics with impeccable panache. They couldn't stay to talk; they just took our money and ran. You find such people everywhere on the Underground, plucking and blowing in corridors or at the base of escalators, boldly ignoring the orders to stop that blare from loudspeakers above their heads.

Many huskers work alone, but some hunt in packs. In the interests of science, I watch a succession of such groups in that neat little open-air theatre formed by one of the sunken courtyards in the Covent Garden Piazza.

First to take their stand behind the semicircle of brass studs - busking here is strictly policed - is a string group led

by an Irish bassist-clown who achieves miracles of audience participation without once stepping the magic line. Next comes a string quartet that wouldn't be out of place at the Wigmore Hall. Then come two singers announcing themselves as Joan Sutherland and Renata Tebaldi, who deliver a non-stop feast of Mozart and Puccini while taking it in turns to dash round with the begging bowl, before finishing with a luxuriant rendering of the "Flower Duet" from *Lakmé*. They seem a boldy convivial bunch, but cameras and notebooks make them instantly uneasy. While some are studying at the London conservatories, others are "resting" professionals whose chances at audition might, they say, be threatened if their husking came to light. They are also understandably loth to say what they earn, though £50 a day seems the average: oot terrible, but not easy money for singers who must bust a gut to be heard unamplified. Some-

150

NEW FILMS

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)

Director: Brenda Chapman, Simon Wells.
Steve Hickner
Starring: Val Kilmer, Ralph Fiennes.
Michelle Pfeiffer
DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged his cartoon *Life of Moses* "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result winds up as *The Ten Commandments* by way

of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)

See *The Independent Recommends*, right. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Phoenix Cinema, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

MY NAME IS JOE (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, right. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Haymarket

THE NEGOTIATOR (15)

In the follow-up to *Babe*, knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak animatronic fairytale. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

OUT OF SIGHT (15)

George Clooney plays the law-breaking hero as a down-and-dirty version of Cary Grant, and turns in the best performance of his career so far. He seems to be a grown-up film star when most of Hollywood's male heart-throbs don't look old enough to get served in a pub. West End: Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

BLADE (18)

A techno soundtrack hums and grinds behind this monotonous arcade-game thriller about a New York vampire-killer tackling a power-crazed new bloodsucker. Noise and martial-arts action mask its tiny pedigree.

West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

THE BOYS (18)

Out of jail after serving a sentence for GBH, oldest "boy" Brett Sprague (David Wenham) moves back into his mum's drab suburban home, terrifies his girlfriend and turns his younger brothers into petty henchmen. *The Boys* spotlights the downside of life Down Under - it's potent, predatory stuff.

West End: Metro, Ritzy Cinema

DANCING AT LUGHNASA (PG)

Less a dance, more of a trudge, this Ireland-set saga is given backbone by Meryl Streep's regal performance. West End: Curzon Mayfair, Notting Hill Coronet, Rio Cinema

DEAD MAN'S CURVE (15)

Writer-director Dan Rosen must have had some terrible experiences at university. All the students at his nameless American college are trying to hutch each other, led into temptation by an obscure regulation that awards straight-A grades to the room-mates of suicides. Though not as deliciously nasty as the *Scream* films, *Dead Man's Curve* delivers a respectable quota of drive-in shocks.

West End: ABC Piccadilly

LIZABETH (15)

Shekhar Kapur's follow-up to *Bandit Queen* is the story of a female figurehead struggling to gain purchase in a male world. But Kapur largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty.

West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Virgin Fulham Road

FEAR AND LOATHING IN LAS VEGAS (18)

Terry Gilliam's adaptation tilts at Ralph Steadman's satiricatory for its tale of a drug-fuelled journalistic assignment. The film soon descends into a carnival of narcotic lunacy, with the one stand-out being Johnny Depp - who brings Hunter S Thompson into bald-headed, pigeon-toed life.

West End: ABC Baker Street, Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Haymarket

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (U)

See *The Independent Recommends*, right. West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Richmond Filmhouse, Ritzy Cinema

LEFT LUGGAGE (PG)

An uncertain soap opera, focusing on the ebb and flow within a Hasidic family in 1970s Holland. Pitiful as drama, the film comes to life as a showcase for its high-profile performers plus rising star Laura Fraser.

West End: ABC Swiss Centre, Curzon Minima, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Phoenix Cinema, Richmond Filmhouse, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill

LOCK, STOCK AND TWO SMOKING BARRELS (18)

Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels follows the lead of *Tarantino*, but the film's defining characteristic is its resilient morality.

West End: ABC Panton Street, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Mezzanine, Warner Village West End

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)

This gaudy swashbuckler gallops full speed through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas' authentically Hispanic do-gooder. A bite-sized history lesson on West Coast politics struggles amid a lot of colourful duels and clattering set-pieces.

West End: Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road

THE WISDOM OF CROCODILES (15)

Jonathan Rhys Myers plays a Bowie-esque idol in glitter make-up; his friend and mentor Curt Wild (Ewan McGregor) is a self-destructive US rocker in the Lou Reed-Iggy Pop mould. The story of how these characters are bound together is told in a film brimming with intelligent ideas. West End: Curzon Soho, Rio Cinema

MULAN (U)

In Disney's animated feature, a girl disguises herself as a soldier to spare her ailing father from the certain death of combat. This set-up has got it all: a pro-active heroine who does not want to tend a man or pet woodland animals; a strong father/daughter relationship; honour and nobility; and, of course, cross-dressing. It's also one of the most visually innovative movies that Disney has ever made.

West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Mezzanine, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Screen on the Green, Virgin Chelsea, Warner Village West End

of Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: ABC Baker Street, ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Empire Leicester Square, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

See *The Independent Recommends*, right. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Phoenix Cinema, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Green, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero

See *The Independent Recommends*, right. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Elephant & Castle Coronet, Hammersmith Virgin, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, Rio Cinema, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero

See *The Independent Recommends*, right. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End

See *The Independent Recommends*, right. West End: ABC Piccadilly

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FRIDAY RADIO

RADIO 1
(97.6-99.8MHz FM)
7.30 Zoe Ball. **9.00** Simon Mayo's Office Party. **12.00** Kevin Greening. **2.00** Mark Radcliffe. **4.00** Chris Moyles. **5.45** Newsbeat. **6.00** Pete Tong's Essential Selection. **9.00** Judge Jules. **11.00** Westwood - Radio 1 Rap Show. **2.00** Fabio and Grooverider. **4.00** **7.00** Emma B.

RADIO 2
(88.9-92.4MHz FM)
6.00 Sarah Kennedy. **7.30** Wake Up to Wogan. **9.30** Ken Bruce. **12.00** Jimmy Young. **2.00** Ed Stewart. **5.05** Des Lynam. **7.00** Hubert Gregg. **7.30** Friday Night Is Music Night: Introduced by Brian Kay from the Hippodrome, Golders Green, London. Robin Stapleton conducts the BBC Concert Orchestra, with guest artists Merv Hegarty and Sarene Voiles. **9.35** Wuthering Heights. **9.30** Listen to the Band. **10.00** David Jacobs. **10.30** Sheridan Morley. **12.00** Lynn Parsons. **4.00** Late Sharma.

RADIO 3
(90.2-94.4MHz FM)
6.00 On Air.
9.00 Masterworks.
10.30 Artist of the Week.
11.00 Sound Stories.
12.00 Composer of the Week: Bach.
1.00 The Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert.

2.00 The BBC Orchestras.
4.00 Music Restored.
4.45 Music Machine.
5.00 In Tune.

7.30 Performance on 3. Live from St Giles' Church, London. Of all the many Christmas hymns, 'In dulci jubilo' must have the best pedigree: dictated, so it is said, to a 14th-century German mystic by a troupe of passing angels. This concert includes some of the numerous settings of this ever-popular Christmas tune by composers including Bach, Praetorius and Buxtehude, plus Christmas cantatas, motets and organ chorales by other composers of the German Baroque. BBC Singers, London Baroque Soloists, Stephen Barr (organ)/Stephen Cleobury. *See Pick of the Day.*
8.15 A Sound Read. Ivan Hewett

PICK OF THE DAY

MICHAEL HASTINGS of *Tonight* and *Vic* fame, has written *The Lost Explorer* (9pm R4). It's set in the US and South America around 1950: Brian Fawcett makes a living lecturing about his father, who disappeared in the Brazilian jungle while searching for a lost city. Nicholas Le Prevost plays Fawcett while Lorelei King is the American woman who falls in love with him, and sets about



ROBERT HANKS

rescuing him from his delusions about his father. Stacy Keach (*right*) plays Fawcett's agent. Cardboard psychology and some fairly implausible circumstances hult it out; underneath, the play is skinny but kind of cute.

A seasonal performance on 3 (7.30pm R3) has settings of *In Dulci Jubilo* and lots of German Baroque.

12.00 Composer of the Week: Elliott Carter. **1.00** **6.00** Through the Night.

RADIO 4
(92.4-94.8MHz FM)

6.00 today.

9.00 NEWS: Desert Island Discs.

9.45 Serial: Dear Bill.

10.00 NEWS: Woman's Hour.

11.00 NEWS: Strictly Convention at.

11.30 The Smart Couple.

12.00 NEWS: You and Yours.

1.00 The World at One.

12.57 Weather.

1.30 Screen Test.

2.00 NEWS: The Archers.

2.45 Afternoon Play: Grounded.

3.00 NEWS: Making History.

3.30 Stamford on Humour.

3.45 Feedback.

4.00 NEWS: Open Book.

4.30 The Message.

5.00 PM.

6.00 Six O'Clock News.

6.30 True Lies.

7.00 NEWS: The Archers.

7.45 Front Row: Francine Stock with the arts programme.

7.45 Under One Roof. With Jenni Murray and guests. Drama: 'Under One Roof' by Jenny Landreth, based on the original stories by Michel Hanson. As Christmas approaches, shopping, cooking and clubbing reach frantic proportions for Gillian, her daughter Chloe and her mother Bernice. Nativity is in the air even for Molly the dog. With Janet Maw and Edna Dore, Director Marilyn Imrie. Part 5.

11.30 The Men in Black.

12.00 News.

12.30 The Late Book: Aphrodite.

1.00 As World Service.

5.35 Shipping Forecast.

5.40 Inshore Forecast.

5.45 Prayer for the Day.

5.47 Leisure Update.

5.56 **6.00** Weather.

Kettering, Northants, by panellists including Heather Hallett OC, chairman of the Bar, Kate Hoey, Home Office minister, Charlotte Raven, Guardian columnist, and Ann Widdecombe, shadow Secretary of State for Health.

8.45 Letter from America. Alistair Cooke with another slice of Americana.

9.00 NEWS: The Friday Play: *The Lost Explorer*. By Michael Hastings. The story of Brian Fawcett, whose tattered never returned from an expedition in the Brazilian jungle. Only his boots and map were recovered. Now Brian travels the world giving talks on his father's career, all the time hoping that one day someone will tell him that his father is still alive. With Nicholas Le Prevost and Stacy Keach. Director Peter Kavanagh.

9.30 News Extra.

7.30 Alan Green's Sportsnight.

Alen Green ends his sporting

guests look back at the week's top stories and preview the weekend's events. There is also live action with news of the night's National-wide League matches.

10.00 Late Night Live. Insight and comment on the day's big issues with Brian Hayes. Including *Paratalk*, *10.30 Sport*, *11.00 News*, *11.15 The Financial World Tonight*.

1.00 Up All Night.

5.00 **6.00** Morning Reports.

CLASSIC FM
(100.0-101.9MHz FM)

6.00 Nick Bailey. **8.00** Henry Kelly.

12.00 Requests. **2.00** Concerto.

3.00 Jamie Crick. **6.30** Newsnight.

7.00 Classics at Seven. **9.00** Concerto. **1.00** Alan Marin. **2.00** Concerto. **3.00** **6.00** Mark Griffiths.

VIRGIN RADIO
(121.1-126.0MHz MW)

6.30 Chris Evans. **9.30** Russ Williams. **1.00** Nick Abbot. **4.00** Harriet Scott. **7.00** Wheels of Steel. **11.00** James Merritt. **2.00** **6.00** Paul Coyne.

WORLD SERVICE RADIO
(198kHz LW)

1.00 Newdesk. **1.30** Who Was St Nicholas? **1.45** Poems by Post. **2.00** Newsday. **2.30** People and Politics. **3.00** World News. **3.05** World Business Report. **3.45** Sports. **3.30** Science in Action. **4.00** Newsdesk. **4.30** Weekend. **5.00** Newsday. **5.30** Outlook. **5.55** **6.00** Spotlight.

TALK RADIO

6.00 Bill Overton and Sally Meen.

9.00 Scott Chisholm. **12.00** Lorraine Kelly. **2.00** Anna Raeburn.

4.00 Peter Deely. **5.00** The Sports Zone. **9.00** Mike Allen.

2.00 **8.00** Mike Dickin.

INDEPENDENT PURSUITS

CHESS

JON SPEELMAN

White: Julian Hodgson
Black: Jonathan Rowson

Trompowsky

1 d4 Nf6 18 h5 gah5

2 Bg5 e6 19 Qb3 h4

3 e3 h6 20 exd6 exd6

4 Bxf7 Qxf6 21 f5 d5

5 c3 d6 22 f6 Nxf6

6 Bd3 g6 23 Nxf6 Bxf6

7 Ne2 Bg7 24 Nf3 Rd6

8 0-0-0 25 Bc2 Rg8

9 f4 Nd7 26 Nhs Bg5

10 Nd2 Qe7 27 Qd3 f6

11 Qe1 b6 28 Nxh6 Bxf6

12 Qg3 Bb7 29 Rxh6 Qg7

13 e5 Rad8 30 Qf3 Rc6

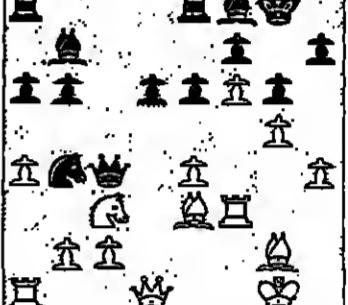
14 Ne1 h5 31 Rf7 Rxh3

15 Rae1 b4 32 Rg7 Rxh3

16 h4 hx3 33 Rh7 mate

17 bxc3 Kh8

Richard Bates (Black)



Harriet Hunt (White to play)

Finally, a ferociously crude finish from Harriet Hunt. Bates attempted, as you are supposed to, to get central counterplay against her wing attack, but was far too late. At the end after 26... Bxf6? did White cement his advantage - 28... Rg7? was fine for Black.

BRIDGE
ALAN HIRON

IT IS odd how a poor choice of opening lead can have a domino effect. This deal struck me as an excellent example (or, as I was defending, a very irritating example). South, playing the odd mixture of a weak no-trump and five card majors, opened One Club and North responded One Diamond. South's rebid of 1 No-trumps showed 15-17 points and he went on to game when North raised to Two.

West, on lead against 3 No-trumps, judged that South might well hold four-card heart suit and selected a nondescript ♦V for his opening salvo. (Even my grandmother would have led ♣K if it seems to be working badly, there will be plenty of time for a switch.) Declarer played low from dummy and, after winning with ♦Q, I returned a low heart. South ducked this but won the heart continuation and ran ♦J to my king. West won the next heart lead and exited safely with another diamond.

After winning on the table and discarding a spade from hand, South came back with ♦A and finessed ♦J successfully. Next came ♦K but the suit did not behave. On this, however, I had to part with a spade, but now dummy's last diamond had come down to only two spades.

The cumulative effect of the lead - our hearts became blocked, one of my entries was taken away, and in an unforeseen fashion - so the defenders had organised the perfect timing for a squeeze. And if West had guarded the spades? No matter, for he has to keep his ♦Q and would also have had to come down to only two spades.

CONCISE CROSSWORD

No.3797 Friday 18 December



ACROSS

- Vocally express disapproval (3)
- Stage (5)
- Large snake (8)
- Paint especially (4)
- Set of digits assigned to identify product (6,6)
- Attack (6)
- End (6)
- Public communication facility (9,3)
- Comfortable seat (4)
- Cold sweet (3-5)
- Poem (5)
- Consume (3)

DOWN

- Extra payments (7)
- Happen (5)
- Unadorned (5)
- Belly (7)
- Escape from (5)
- Involve (6)
- Mean (7)
- Digit (6)
- Navigating instrument (7)
- Run away together (5)
- Hirsute (5)
- Push violently (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Star, 4 Ears (Star torn), 8 Ragtime, 9 Aggro, 10 Meek, 11 Scrapping-end, 12 Bottle-feeding, 15 Backfire, 17 Beam, 20 Large, 21 Aloof, 22 Roof, 23 Debit, DOWN: 1 Segment, 2 Arid, 3 Thenceforward, 4 Emanate, 5 Rogue, 6 Tran, 7 Hot dog, 12 Babble, 13 Lift-off, 14 Ice-boil, 16 Cargo, 18 Meet, 19 Barn.

REGIONAL TELEVISION VARIATIONS

BBC1 N IRELAND
As BBC1 London except: **6.30** Newsline 5.30 (87.7). **9.30** Give My Head, Peace (80/92). **10.30** Film: *Incident Proposal* (92/88). **12.00** The Stand-up Show (50/88). **2.35**

